

THIRTEEN
PRACTICAL SERMONS;

FOUNDED UPON
*DODDRIDGE'S RISE AND PROGRESS
OF RELIGION IN THE SOUL.*

—Not with enticing words of man's wisdom. (1 Cor. ii. 4.)

TO WHICH ARE ANNEXED
ROME IS FALLEN!

A SERMON, PREACHED AT THE
VISITATION HELD AT SCARBOROUGH,
JUNE 5, 1798.

(SECOND EDITION, REVISED AND CORRECTED)

WITH NOTES AND ILLUSTRATIONS:

AND

ST. PETER;

A SERMON, PREACHED BEFORE THE
UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE,
MAY 4, 1800.

K
BY FRANCIS WRANGHAM, M.A.

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To
RALPH CREYKE, Esq.

*whose uniform excellence,
in his various relations to social life,
would authorize the warmest praise,
which*

Affection or Gratitude could offer;

*but whose sensibility
would shrink equally from the panegyric,
presented by Justice or by Regard;*

THESE DISCOURSES

are respectfully inscribed

by Him,

*who can now, alas! assume no title of nearer connection,
than that of*

a very sincere and much-obliged Friend.

F. W.

June 11, 1800.



P R E F A C E.

TO praise the doctrine and arrangement of the volume, upon which the following series of Practical Sermons is founded, would be

———“ to add another hue
Unto the rainbow, or with taper-light
To seek the beauteous eye of heaven to garnish.”

A book from the pen of DODDRIDGE, indebted for “ its existence to the request, for its copiousness to the plan, and for much of its perspicuity to the review” of *Watts*, who likewise bestowed upon it his warmest approbation, stands little in need of other panegyric. By *Watts* indeed it was originally projected, as one of the most considerable services of a life, distinguished for emi-

ment exertion in the cause of religious truth; but continued infirmity prevented him from carrying his purpose into effect. It was therefore matter of great satisfaction to him, to see it accomplished by the friend, upon whom his affectionate importunity had devolved the execution of it, in the simplest and most intelligible manner.

For this simplicity DODDRIDGE, in his preface, requests that “persons of a more refined education will pardon him, as for a necessary piece of charity towards his humbler readers, and an important instance of that *honouring of all men*, which is enjoined by the lowly spirit of the gospel.” Upon the same principles, in accommodating his language to the pulpit, I have never (I trust) throughout the subsequent discourses, swerved more widely from his example, than what the general diffusion of learning and information appeared to require. Many entire

tire sentences, and the greatest part of his scriptural quotations, have been studiously retained; and, for the sake of renewing or preserving a clear recollection of what has preceded, short recapitulations are occasionally introduced.

The scarcity of sermons which, while they *preach the gospel to the poor*, disgust not the fastidious ear of modern elegance by triteness or vulgarity, has long been a subject of regret and of complaint. It was remarked by Dr. *Johnson*, that “the established clergy, in general, did not preach plain enough; and that polished periods and glittering paragraphs flew over the heads of the common people, sunk as they were in languor and lethargy, without making any impression upon their hearts.” These considerations first suggested to me the idea of the present undertaking: and it has already

amply rewarded me for the time and labour employed upon it, by beguiling of late many heavy hours, which might otherwise have been wasted in unoccupied solitude and un-availing sorrow.

Fame, it is certain, in its popular meaning, can hardly enter into the views of One—who, in these days of literary refinement and of religious indifference, endeavours with DODDRIDGE'S subject to unite much of his plainness and familiarity. That person too, “whom I wished to please, has sunk into the grave; and success and miscarriage, in their worldly acceptation, are to me empty sounds.” But there is a fame—the commendation, I mean, of the wife and of the good—which is ever worth ambition; and that (if to that my purpose, rather than its accomplishment, give me any title) will abundantly console me for the absence, or the loss, of all other renown.

In

In soliciting for my contracted work, what the Author entreated for his more extensive performance—that it may be thoroughly perused, before it is finally judged—I shall not, I hope, even in this age of superficial reading, be deemed wholly unreasonable. Let it be considered at least, in my excuse, that we are generally but too prone to seize, and to defend, separate portions of our common Christianity: to rend into useless shreds a system which, like the coat of its great Teacher, is *without seam, woven from the top throughout*; and to look upon our opponents with an eye of jealousy and suspicion, “as if preparations for securing one part of a ship in a storm implied a contrivance to sink the rest!”

It remains only to be stated, that these thirteen discourses were successively delivered to a village-congregation, upon the first,
second,

second, &c. Sundays after the Epiphany, &c. in the present year (1800). This will account for the sentences in each, distinguished by capitals, which were in every instance part of the previous service of the reading-desk ; and, as such, seemed likely to derive peculiar impressiveness from their recurrence in the pulpit.

Of the two annexed sermons, the former (*ROME is fallen !*) has been already kindly received by the public ; and may therefore again, in its corrected state, without further preface, solicit their attention : the other, upon the conduct and character of St. PETER, is now for the first time submitted to their perusal.

F. W.

THE

THE piety of DODDRIDGE, and his indifference to popular applause (the love of which he pronounces “a meanness, to be conquered by a philosophy far inferior to that of our Divine Master’s”) may be estimated from the following prayer, prefixed to his volume, for the success of the doctrines which it explains and recommends.

Oh ! Thou great eternal Original, and Author of all created being and happiness ! I adore Thee, who hast made man a creature capable of religion, and hast bestowed this dignity and felicity upon our nature, that it may be taught to say, “*Where is God our Maker*” ? I lament that degeneracy spread over the whole human race, which has *changed our glory into shame*, and has rendered the forgetfulness of God (unnatural as it is) so common, and so universal a disease. Holy Father, we know it is thy presence and thy teaching alone, that can reclaim thy wandering children ; can impress a sense of divine things on the heart, and render that sense lasting and effectual. From Thee proceed all good purposes and desires ; and this desire above
all,

all, of diffusing wisdom, piety and happiness in this world, which (though sunk in such deep apostasy) thine infinite mercy has not utterly forsaken.

Thou knowest, O LORD, the hearts of the children of men; and an upright soul, in the midst of all the censures and suspicions it may meet with, rejoices in thine intimate knowledge of its most secret sentiments, and principles of action. Thou knowest the sincerity and fervency, with which thine unworthy servant desires to spread the knowledge of thy name, and the favour of thy gospel, among all to whom this work may reach. Thou knowest that, hadst Thou given him an abundance of this world, it would have been in his esteem the noblest pleasure that abundance could have afforded, to have been thine almoner in distributing thy bounties to the indigent and necessitous, and so causing the sorrowful heart to rejoice in thy goodness, dispensed through his hands. Thou knowest that, hadst Thou given him (either by ordinary, or extraordinary methods) the gifts of healing, it would have been his daily delight to relieve the pains, the maladies, and the infirmities of men's bodies; to have seen the languishing countenance brightened by returning health, and cheerfulness; and much more to have beheld the
roving

roving distracted mind, reduced to calmness and serenity, in the exercise of its rational faculties. Yet happier, far happier will he think himself in those humble circumstances, in which thy providence hath placed him, if Thou vouchsafe to honour these his feeble endeavours, as the means of relieving and enriching men's minds; of recovering them from the madness of a sinful state, and bringing back thy reasonable creatures to the knowledge, the service, and the enjoyment of their God; or of improving those, who are already reduced.

O may it have that blessed influence on the person, whosoever he be, that is now reading these lines, and on all who may read or hear them! Let not my LORD be angry, if I presume to ask, that—however weak and contemptible this work may seem in the eyes of the children of this world, and however imperfect it really be, as well as the author of it unworthy—it may nevertheless live before Thee; and, through a divine power, be mighty to produce the RISE AND PROGRESS OF RELIGION in the minds of multitudes in distant places, and in generations yet to come! Impute it not, O God, as a culpable ambition, if I desire that (whatever becomes of my name, about which I would not lose one thought before Thee) this work, to
which

which I am now applying myself in thy strength, may be completed and propagated far abroad ; that it may reach to those that are yet unborn, and teach them thy name and thy praise, when the author has long dwelt in the dust : that so, when he shall appear before Thee in the great day of final account, his joy may be increased, and his crown brightened, by numbers before unknown to each other and to him ! But, if this petition be too great to be granted to One—who pretends no claim, but thy sovereign grace, to hope for being favoured with the least—give him to be, in thine almighty hand, the blessed instrument of converting and saving one soul : and, if it be but one, and that the weakest and meanest of those who are capable of receiving this address, it shall be most thankfully accepted, as a rich recompence ; and though it should be amidst a thousand disappointments, with respect to others, yet it shall be the subject of immortal songs of praise to thee, O blessed God, for and by every soul, whom through the blood of JESUS and the grace of thy Spirit Thou hast saved ; and everlasting honours shall be ascribed to the Father, to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, by the innumerable company of angels, and by the general assembly and church of the first-born in heaven. *Amen.*

CON-

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S E R M O N I.

PLAN OF THE SERIES,
AND
EXHORTATION TO REPENTANCE.

ACTS XX. 21.

*Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the
Greeks, Repentance toward GOD, and Faith
toward our Lord JESUS CHRIST.*

I N looking attentively around us, and considering the various characters and pursuits of mankind, we cannot but observe that—framed, as they alone of all creatures are, for religion—they still in general fatally neglect it. By religion I mean that sense of God, of our obligations to Him and our dependence upon Him, which should naturally incite us to engage zealously in His
B service.

service. Now in this Christian, this protestant and highly-favoured country does religion so interpreted (as regulating the life, and occupying the heart) every-where abound? Alas! The profanation of the name and day of the LORD, the drunkenness, the falsehood, the impurity, the selfishness, the pride, the profusion, the spiritual insensibility so universally prevalent loudly proclaim the contrary. Where is the neighbourhood, where is even the parish, of which upon due examination we can pronounce, "Religion fills this little circle"?

In many instances there may be observed an external decency of behaviour, a periodical punctuality of attendance upon the forms of public worship, and occasionally perhaps a cold and heartless recital of family devotions. But love to GOD, and a reverent sense of His constant presence; belief in CHRIST, with a solicitude to escape the punishments and secure the rewards announced in His gospel——where are these to be found?

To him, whose view connects the conduct

duct of men with its eternal consequences, how mournful are these considerations! How melancholy it is to reflect that, from a deficiency of this warm and active spirit of Christianity, many—many probably of those, who now hear me—exulting at present in the prime of life, and in the full flow of health and spirits, must within a few years be swept away into irretrievable destruction!

Suffer me then, I beseech you, my brethren, upon this most important of subjects—on which, know assuredly, your everlasting happiness depends—without any dread of the name of Enthusiast, in all plainness and freedom as well as seriousness, to bespeak your closest and most earnest attention; that, if you have yet lived as *without God in the world*, you may now at last be awakened into a sense of your ruinous mistake. I do not entreat you merely to listen to my arguments, while you are here, but to weigh and examine them after you are gone hence; and to believe, that they proceed from sincerity and love towards you. He is indeed unworthy of the name of Man, who can

look upon a brother's danger without endeavouring to avert it; and when that danger refers to suffering, intense in degree and infinite in duration, how ought his zeal to be augmented! how ought his fervour, his industry, his anxiety to increase!

In this therefore and the twelve following discourses, founded upon the excellent work of a late pious and able Divine,* I shall consider myself as addressing a portion of that numerous class of mankind, who have hitherto been unconcerned about their eternal interest; and

(I.) summon them from their criminal listlessness to a care,

(II.) to an immediate and ardent care about it; impressing an awful conviction of sin upon their consciences,

(III.) and depriving them of all those vain excuses and expectations, by which they may have long fostered a fallacious security. I will afterwards refer them to the fearful sentence denounced by their Judge against sinners,

* Dr. DODDRIDGE's *Rise and Progress of Religion in the Soul.*

(IV.) and prove how utterly incapable they are of themselves to elude the execution of it: then disclose the *glad tidings* of “Pardon and Salvation, by Faith in CHRIST JESUS;”

(V.) point out the way—of “Good works, wrought through the operation of that Faith”—by which they are to be attained, and urge them to walk in it.

(VI.) There however, if any of them still remain insensible to their danger or indifferent about its removal, there I must leave them; and, addressing myself to the soul overwhelmed with a consciousness of guilt, endeavour to guide its inquiries as to the evidences of sincere Repentance and Faith,

(VII.) by exhibiting a more particular view of the several branches of the Christian temper. This will naturally lead me to state the need in which we stand of the influences of the Holy Spirit, and the encouragement we have to hope for them. I shall next, as difficulties generally attend the first entrance upon a pious life, in order to arm the convert against them,

(VIII.) recommend a solemn dedication of himself to the divine service at the **LORD'S** Table; sketch that uniform course of devotion, which ought daily to be followed;

(IX.) and invite him to pursue it—enumerating the various temptations, which may mislead him into negligence and ruin.

(X.) I shall subsequently consider the case of religious languor and decay, whence the return is but easy to known and deliberate sin:

(XI.) represent the melancholy condition of those so circumstanced, under the hiding of **GOD'S** face, and after the withdrawing of **HIS** injured Spirit; and notice the useful discipline of calamity, to which even the best of men are exposed, especially when they desert their Maker's service. I shall, lastly, attempt to assist the Christian in estimating his improvement, as before in ascertaining his sincerity;

(XII.) remind him of those blessings of providence and grace, which must excite love towards his Creator; urge him to that vigorous exertion in the discharge of social duties,

duties, which so greatly becomes and will in the end so highly exalt him;

(XIII.) paint the rapture with which he may reasonably, though humbly, look forward to the hour of death, and to the day of judgment; and, finally, close the scene by accompanying him to the confines of that dark and dreary region, through which he must pass to glory.

God grant that I may in any instance be so successful as to leave those triumphing, whom I found trembling, at the prospect; as to move those to activity, who have hitherto been indolent, in the investigation of topics—compared with which every other object of pursuit is lighter than wind, and flimsier than vanity!

He must speak plainly, who would speak effectually. In addressing you as careless, I do not imply that you are *desperately wicked*:—that you have constantly blasphemed the name of God, or regularly broken His sabbath; that you have injured your Neighbours in their lives or characters or property, by violence or calumny or imposition; or

that you have scandalously degraded Yourself by habitual intemperance and impurity. On the contrary—I will suppose that your usual deportment has been decent, and amiable, and sober; that you admit the existence and providence of a Deity, respect the laws and regulations of civil order, and exhibit in your general conduct a regard for the maxims of private morality. And yet you may still have omitted to PRESENT YOUR BODIES A LIVING SACRIFICE, HOLY, ACCEPTABLE UNTO GOD, WHICH IS YOUR REASONABLE SERVICE:* You may still lack that *one thing*, upon which rests your only chance of future felicity.

Let each of you ask himself these plain questions; “Is the love of God the governing principle of my life? Do I walk under a sense of His perpetual presence? Do I pray unto Him and praise Him, frequently and fervently?” To these and similar inquiries the careless sinner, if he deal sincerely with himself, must answer—No. His own heart will condemn him: how much more then

* *Rom.* xii. 1, occ. in *Epist.* 1 *Epiph.*

God,

GOD, who is greater than his heart, and knoweth all things; who seeth in secret; who compasseth his path, and his lying down, and is acquainted with all his ways!

Of GOD, thus gloriously characterized, we seem indeed in bodily diseases to be sufficiently conscious, by soliciting at His hands health and deliverance; but, in the much more perilous sickness of the soul, we have no such recourse to Him: we neither ask nor covet the blessings of the gospel—though we profess to believe that gospel to be His, and those blessings to be eternal. Our thoughts and hours are divided between the business of life and its amusements; or, if now and then a serious discourse or an act of awful providence strike upon our attention, the impulse (I am afraid) in general is felt but for a very short period, and we relapse into our accustomed indifference. Upon the whole—we act as if we were resolved, at our own risque, to ascertain the terrible consequences of neglecting all religious occupations and exercises. Even in church, our fancy sometimes wanders

wanders *unto the ends of the earth*; and we welcome every levity of the imagination, which releases the mind from the insipidity of divine worship: satisfied (as it should seem) that the Deity either knew nothing of our behaviour, or was indifferent respecting it; or entirely careless both of His presence, and of His displeasure.

And is it then come to this, with all our boasted belief of Christianity, that its doctrines and its duties do not seem worth a thought! That one hour cannot be spared to reflect upon GOD, and CHRIST, and Ourselves—what we are at present, and (which is a still more alarming subject of meditation) what we must be hereafter—things in themselves so evident as well as excellent, that almost any one, who is not a child or an idiot, may reason himself into a conviction of their truth and dignity!

But it is not our neglect of them, Sirs, which can destroy either their certainty or their importance. It may indeed destroy us, but it cannot affect them in any respect whatever.

Let

Let me then rouse each of you, as *Jonah* was roused, when slumbering in the midst of much less dangerous circumstances; *What meanest thou, O sleeper? arise, call upon thy God.* You surely cannot doubt, as to the propriety of doing so. You own that there is a God, and well you may; for you cannot open your eyes, without beholding obvious proofs of His existence. You see Him in every object without, you feel Him in every vein and nerve within; and are constrained to acknowledge, that in *Him you live, and move, and have your being.* It is not (you well know) your own wisdom or attention that causes your heart to beat, your lungs to play, or your blood to circulate: These processes are continued whilst you sleep, as well as whilst you wake, and when you think not of them. Neither is the divine care limited to you, but extended throughout the universe: not only farther than your view, but even than your imagination can carry you. Consider the light and heat of the sun, the temperature of the air, and the appropriate and plentiful

teous provision made for all creatures; the
 grafs, the grain, the flowers, the fruits;
 every thing that fufains, and every thing
 that delights you—and fay, whether all does
 not fully evince the prefence, the providence,
 and the benevolence of the Creator. They
 do more; they exhibit his power: and what
 power, lefs than infinite, could thus per-
 petually—from year to year, from age to
 age, unwearied though unremitting—pro-
 duce fuch magnificent, fuch marvellous
 effects? Who but the LORD—THE FIRST
 AND THE LAST, BESIDE WHOM THERE
 IS NO GOD—could STRETCH FORTH THE
 HEAVENS ALONE, AND SPREAD ABROAD
 THE EARTH BY HIMSELF?*

And is He not alfo a moft obfervant Be-
 ing? *He, that planted the ear, fhall He not*
hear? He, that formed the eye, fhall He not
fee? He, who beholds our wants, fhall He
 not alfo look upon our actions? Trifle
 not, I befeech you, with your confciences,
 which know that He not only witneffes

* *Ifai.* xliv. 6, 24. occ. in I Leffon 1 Epiph.

but judges ; and that His judgment (whether it approves, or condemns) is final—admitting neither of appeal nor of reversal.

Is it reasonable then that this supreme and munificent God should be disregarded by His dependents ; *the work of His hands*, and the pensioners of His bounty ? That they, who alone are capable of knowing and serving Him, should alone slight and forget Him ? My brethren, we are not slighted or forgotten by Him. We need not, for evidence of this, refer to the helpless days of our infancy and childhood : to whom do we owe the repose of last night, the comforts of to-day, the mercies of this moment ?

And should we thus treat any earthly benefactor ? Should we conduct ourselves with so much ingratitude towards a kind parent, or a generous friend ; neither thanking nor even acknowledging his goodness ? No. Human nature, bad as it is, is not yet fallen quite so low ; nay, brutal nature is above this : *the ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib*. Man only *doth not know* ; man alone *doth not consider*.

If

If you have any ingenuousness of temper, you will grieve at this review: If you have not, I must proceed differently, and inquire—Whether in common policy you can deem yourselves safe, while pursuing such a course of behaviour as this?

Believing that there is an invisible and eternal world, and no sophistry has yet been able to prove the contrary, do you not perceive that you are preparing for yourselves *destruction and misery* in it? Will your indolence and carelessness afford you any security, or supply you with any excuse for themselves? Can they protect you from death, or exempt you from judgment? As well might you expect that shutting your eyes would defend you from a bullet or a sword. No; in the *latter days* (when perhaps it may be too late) you will *consider* these things *perfectly*: then you will be compelled to think of them, whether you chuse it or not. And would it not be more judicious to avert the horrors of that day, by timely and serious reflection?

I need not multiply words upon this subject;

ject; your consciences must be already convinced. I will only ask you one more question: Would you, on any terms whatever, come to a determination resolutely from this moment to dismiss all thoughts of religion, and to abide by the consequences? I believe, hardly any man living would: you are all, I trust, ready to shudder at the mere proposal.

If then it be necessary to consider these things at all, it is necessary to consider them immediately; as life is neither so long, nor so certain, that a wise man would chuse to hazard much upon its continuance.

But this must be reserved, as the subject of my next discourse.

Now to GOD, &c

SERMON II.

IMMEDIATE REPENTANCE NECESSARY,

AS

HUMAN GUILT DEEP AND AGGRAVATED.

MARK XIII. 36.

—*Lest, coming suddenly, He find you sleeping.*

BY my last discourse (in which I exhibited a concise view of the universal presence, agency, and perfection of God; of your innumerable obligations to Him; and of the danger of neglecting His service) I convinced you, I trust, that at some period or other you must attend to religious considerations: let me, in the present, earnestly press upon you the necessity of attending to them—immediately.

Go thy way for this time; when I have a

C

convenient

convenient season, I will call for thee—was the language of *Felix*, as he trembled at *St. Paul's* reasoning upon *righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come*: and his procrastination proved his ruin. For your own sakes, my brethren, I would not be so dismissed: not, if you should even fix that *convenient season*—next year, next month, next week, to-morrow; but would urge, would solicit you to bring the matter to an instant issue. It may seem strange that upon such an occasion entreaty—and, still more, remonstrance—should be requisite. What I recommend to you is in itself so rational and excellent, that I should rather expect to hear you exclaim—“May I then lift up my eyes unto God, whom I have so much offended? May I devote myself to Him; and commence an intercourse, which shall last with unabating felicity for ever and ever? And shall I draw back, and say—Let me live a few weeks, or a few days longer without Him; let me yet a little farther continue to provoke and neglect Him?” Surely this would be highly imprudent

prudent (to speak in the gentlest manner) even if your continuance in life were ever so certain, and your capacity of repenting at any period of it ever so much in your own power. But who or what are you, that

you should presume to count upon either?

What is your life? Is it not even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away?

Some of you will perhaps observe—"I am young and vigorous, and see multitudes about me more than double my own age; not a few of whom seem to reckon it quite soon enough; even for them, to attend to the duties of religion."

I beseech you, think not only upon the living; turn your contemplation for a few moments to the mansions of the dead: to those graves, in which many of your youthful companions are now laid, awaiting their final summons to judgment. Awhile ago they probably, like you, were brisk and joyous and active; full of life, and energy, and expectation: and, like you too, they would perhaps have deemed any one strangely troublesome, who should have interrupted their business or their pleasures

with a lecture upon death and eternity : and yet they were, even then, on the very borders of both. Their once-robust bodies lie at present cold and powerless, without sense or motion, in the dust : and (what is of infinitely greater importance to them) their souls, whether prepared or unprepared, have no longer the privilege of working out their salvation. And would it be miraculous, would it be singular, if such a fate should befall you ? How do you know, what right have you to hope, that you shall be more favoured than they ? It is at least possible you may not, and that very possibility is terrible. Surprized into the presence of a God, whom you have slighted ; torn from a world, which you have cherished ; fixed in a state, to which you would never seriously direct your attention—how ought you to tremble at the mere chance of such an event ? To trifle with your Maker any longer, after this additional warning, will only increase the provocation you have already given Him ; and perhaps lead Him to cut you off, if not from life, at least from repentance.

Why

Why then will you run this desperate hazard? Do you think reformation will become less necessary, or more easy, by delay? You know it will not. GOD hath already stated his terms of pardon in the gospel of CHRIST: and it is not to be imagined that he will ever send another messenger and another gospel, with promises of salvation to the impenitent, provided they go occasionally to church—to hear (or perhaps to sleep over) the service. Or do you suppose you shall love sin less, when it becomes more familiar to you, and your consciences are still farther enfeebled by habitual wickedness? You cannot. No one would say, in a distemper threatening his mortal existence, “I will wait till I grow worse, before I apply to a physician; and, when the disease shall have established itself more firmly, endeavour to remove it.” No. It is only, where the eternal life of the soul is concerned—that men think thus wildly, determine thus madly, act thus extravagantly.

Or do you expect GOD will be the more

ready to assist you, the more you neglect His assistance? He is even now perhaps in some measure wrestling with your hearts. If you feel any secret relents, any inward compunctions, you are not yet utterly forsaken: but take care, they be not the last.

You may die, as I have been observing, immediately: you own, it is possible you may. Yet still worse than immediate death is continued impenitency. Without presuming to determine upon the chance of your being *given over to a reprobate mind*—I can only say that, if you delay any longer, the time of bitter repentance must somewhere or other come upon you; and increased anguish, either here or hereafter, be your certain portion. I do therefore again earnestly entreat you not to hesitate upon so awful an occasion—not a day, not an hour longer. *Give not sleep to your eyes, nor slumber to your eye-lids*, before you turn from this fatal negligence to the LORD your Redeemer for pardon and acceptance.

You

You must be fully aware of your guilt. However dignified or distinguished you may be among men, whatever blood run in your veins; if your seat be among princes, and your arm *the terror of the mighty in the land of the living*; your consciences must have informed you that you were born the natural subjects of God, and under the indispensable obligation of His law: which law nevertheless you have not only not exactly observed, but in many and many instances flagrantly violated. Can you deny it? Will you assert your innocence, your righteousness? Remember—it must be a complete innocence, a perfect righteousness: or it will only prove that you are not quite so criminal as some of your fellow-creatures; and deserve therefore a lighter degree of punishment than they. Let each of you then ask his own conscience seriously—“Have I never sinned in thought, in word, or in deed against God?” *Solomon* averred that, in his day, *there was not a just man upon earth, that did good and sinned not*: *St. Paul* affirmed that, in

ready to assist you, the more you neglect His assistance? He is even now perhaps in some measure wrestling with your hearts. If you feel any secret relentings, any inward compunctions, you are not yet utterly forsaken: but take care, they be not the last.

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his day, *all had sinned and come short of the glory of God*: St. John asserted, in his day, that *if any man said he had no sin, he deceived himself and the truth was not in him*. And do you believe the world in general so much improved since their time, has it indeed improved in your own time so much, as to render those declarations no longer applicable or appropriate? Or will each of you quote himself in particular, as an exception; and boldly pronounce, before the Omniscient, “I am the man”? Admitting that you have shunned the grosser acts of immorality, I would inquire—Have you in no case whatever infringed the more delicate rules of piety, temperance, or charity? Can none of your acquaintance testify, that you have said or done something amiss? Will not your own heart, which the inspired writer denominates *desperately wicked*, convict you of having at least thought wickedly?—of having indulged pride, or passion, or an excessive fondness for *the world, and the things that are in the world*?—of having murmured (secretly at least, if not openly) against

against the dispensations of Providence?—of having abused His bounty to idle, and in some instances perhaps to pernicious purposes?—of having *drawn near Him* in impious mockery *with your mouth, and with your lips honoured Him, while your heart was removed far from Him?* Do you recollect no single breach of his commandments? If you do—by that *one* offence, in a scriptural sense, you are become *guilty of all*; and are as incapable of being justified by any obedience of your own, as if you had committed ten thousand.

But, in reality, you have committed ten thousand. When you reflect on the duties you have neglected, as well as on the sins you have incurred; on the good things you have left undone, as well as on the evil things you have done; on your omission of prayer, particularly private and secret prayer, though enjoined both by the precept and example of CHRIST; and on your general, if not uniform, indifference to the honour of GOD, and to the temporal and eternal happiness of your fellow-creatures——when you reflect, I say, upon all these,
with

with all their varieties—the number will swell beyond the possibility of account, and compel you to exclaim, “*mine iniquities are more than the hairs of mine head.*”

It is no *small matter* to have transgressed the laws of your Maker, even through carelessness and inadvertency: how much worse then, to have done it consciously and presumptuously! Do you know, against whom you have magnified yourselves?—against whom *you have exalted your voice, and lifted up your eyes on high?*—whose ordinances you have trampled under foot?—whose friendship you have rejected? Is He a man only, like yourselves? Is He only a temporal monarch; who, *having killed the body, after that has no more that he can do?* Were it even so, so you would not have dared to treat Him. What then must be your guilt—when He, whom you have offended, is the Majesty of Heaven; before whom angels and archangels, cherubim and seraphim, continually bow? You are AFRAID OF A MAN THAT SHALL DIE, AND OF THE SON OF MAN WHICH SHALL

SHALL BE MADE AS GRASS; AND FORGET THE LORD YOUR MAKER, THAT HATH STRETCHED FORTH THE HEAVENS, AND LAID THE FOUNDATIONS OF THE EARTH.*

And what are you, who thus audaciously presume to oppose Him; when, by a single act of His sovereign power—in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye—He could strip you of every possession, extinguish in you every hope and every enjoyment, and blot you out from existence, or consign you to instant and eternal agony! Such, wretched men, is the Being, whose express statutes you have violated; the God, before whom you stand convicted—not of one or two, but of thousands and ten thousands of transgressions; committed in a less or greater degree ever since you were born, and heightened by almost every conceivable circumstance of aggravation. Reflect upon particulars, and deny the charge—if you can.

If KNOWLEDGE be an aggravation of guilt, how is yours thereby aggravated! Born in a Christian country, you *have known to do good, and have not done it.*

* *Isai. li. 12, 13. occ. in I. Lesson 2 Epiph.*

Initiated at an early age in the doctrines and duties of Christianity, you have since again and again received instruction, *precept upon precept and line upon line*, on those important subjects: you have likewise frequently been warned of the consequences of disobedience—that *they, which commit such things, are worthy of death*; and yet you *not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them.*

If DIVINE LOVE AND MERCY be an aggravation of sin committed against them, how is yours thereby also aggravated! Taken by GOD *out of the womb*, protected in infancy, nourished and *brought up by Him as His children*, blessed with reason and the means of improving it, supported by His unwearied liberality, heard and relieved *when trouble came upon you*, snatched from diseases when you seemed to be *deprived of the residue of your years*—or perhaps favoured with uninterrupted health, which is at least an equivalent obligation—say, what one thing you possess, which He has not bestowed upon you! Add to all
this

this the kind communications of His will, His tender remonstrances, His gracious entreaties (heard indeed, but despised) and then pronounce, whether your rebellion against Him be not deepened in its complexion by the blackest ingratitude.

If to commit sin against the EXPOSTULATIONS OF CONSCIENCE be an aggravation of it, consult your own bosoms, whether your guilt has not so likewise been aggravated! Have not your consciences often condemned your conduct, even while your minds were busied in framing, or your tongues in uttering excuses for it? Have they not often painfully remonstrated with you? These neglected admonitions were in effect the voice of God; and, when His *sentence for evil works* is executed upon you in everlasting death, you shall hear that voice speaking to you again—but in thunder: in louder tones and with severer accents, which may neither be despised nor disregarded, it shall then upbraid you to eternity—because its advice, in time, was contemptuously thrown away.

If

If sin be aggravated, when incurred after the SPIRIT OF GRACE has moved upon the soul, yours has also had that additional aggravation. The Deity is said to *strive with sinners*; and this doubtless you must occasionally have experienced in some secret impulses, urging you to think of religion seriously and immediately. O why were those happy motions trifled with, or forgotten! Why might not the sentence have reasonably gone forth, at that time, in righteous displeasure—*My Spirit shall strive no more?* Who indeed may venture to affirm, that it is not gone forth already! If you feel not at present some inward agitation, some kindling remorse, there is (I fear) but too much room to apprehend it.

Lastly—your sin will be aggravated, if you have ever solemnly DEVOTED yourselves to GOD and His service; and if you have not, after so many earnest and affectionate solicitations, that alone is in itself sufficiently criminal. But you were devoted to Him through baptism by your parents:

rents : and, what is more personal and express, have undoubtedly in some season of difficulty cried to him for assistance ; promising, if He would hear and help you in that hour of extremity, to forsake your sins, and serve Him as long as you should live. He did hear and help you, or you would not now probably be in this place ; and by that aid, as it were, bound down your vows upon you. Your guilt therefore in the violation of them remains before him, neither obliterated nor overlooked ; and the day will come, when the record shall be laid before you too.

Consider then, my brethren, what answer you can make to these charges : prepare your excuses, call your witnesses, or appeal from your appointed Judge to one superior—O folly ! superior to the Supreme. Alas ! your defences are so weak and frivolous, that a mere fellow-creature can easily detect and confound them ; and your own hearts indeed anticipate the issue. You stand self-convicted of wilfully trampling upon the
law

law of God, of ungratefully despising or perverting His numberless blessings, of resisting conscience, His representative in the human soul, of grieving and *doing despite unto* the Spirit of Grace, of breaking your own most solemn vows and engagements. Thousands (it is to be feared) whose guilt never equalled yours, are *reserved under darkness unto the judgment of the great day*; and it is no less astonishing than merciful that you are pursued still farther with invitations, still longer indulged with opportunities of repentance. Oh! waste not the precious time, thus bountifully granted to you; but return to your habitations with firm and humble resolutions, suiting a case so terrible as yours.

Now to God, &c.

SERMON

SERMON III.

THE SINNER SILENCED,
AND
SENTENCED.

ROM. III. 19.

*That every mouth may be stopped, and all the
world may become guilty before GOD.*

IN my first discourse on this subject, after stating with concern that true religion was rarely to be observed in the lives or sentiments of its nominal professors, I sketched a short plan of a series of discourses which I meant to deliver upon it ; and earnestly entreated your attention to them, as involving in their issue your eternal welfare. I then proceeded to represent the nature of GOD—His universal presence, agency, and perfection : your innumerable obligations to
D Him ;

Him; and the danger of neglecting His service: concluding with an appeal to your consciences, *whether these things were not so.*

In my second, supposing you at last awakened to a sense of your hazardous situation, but still deferring your repentance, I urged you to set about it immediately—from the excellency and pleasure of the thing itself; from the uncertainty of those future opportunities, that *convenient season*, upon which sinners are but too apt to depend; from the unchangeableness of God's present demands; from the tendency of delay to render compliance more difficult; and from the danger of being deserted by the Divine Spirit. I therefore besought you to avoid procrastination, as in all things (and, especially, in things of eternal moment) most perilous.

To prove the necessity of this immediate repentance still more forcibly, I proceeded to exhibit your guilt in rebelling against God, by demonstrating—that all men are born under His law; that no man hath perfectly kept it, referring to your own hearts
for

for the confirmation of this article; and that to have broken it must appear an evil inexpressibly great: particularly, when we reflect—that guilt is highly aggravated by sinning against knowledge, by divine favours neglected, by convictions of conscience overborne, by the strivings of God's Spirit resisted, and by vows and resolutions violated.

Standing therefore in these alarming circumstances (as we all must stand) self-condemned sinners, obnoxious to the sentence of a holy law, which can make no allowance even for the smallest transgression—much less, for transgressions great and numberless as yours—can you think of framing any defence? Can you do otherwise than plead guilty, at the bar of divine Justice?

Alas for the corruption and treachery of the human heart! Driven from one refuge, it will fly to another; and, with all its criminality flashing in its face, alledge that it is not quite so wicked as it has been represented; and that there are some excuses to be adduced in its favour, which may at least

extenuate its offences. What then are these excuses? What can you advance in your own behalf? Remember—the answer is not to be returned to me (one weak and sinful like yourselves, who must shortly stand with you at the same bar) but to a Judge, who can neither be deceived nor conciliated by false or idle equivocations.

Will you plead “that you are descended from Christian parents”? That was indeed your high privilege; and it will enhance your condemnation, that you have abused it. *Ishmael* was descended from *Abraham*, the friend of God; and *Esau* from *Isaac*, the child of promise: and yet they were both excluded from the blessing. The rich man likewise in the parable, though he called *Abraham* father, was tormented in flames: and CHRIST himself declares, that MANY OF THE CHILDREN OF THE KINGDOM SHALL BE CAST OUT.*

Or will you urge “that you exercised your thoughts about the speculative parts of religion”? Alas! This too increases your guilt. To have broken the law of God,

* *Matt.* viii. 12. occ. in *Gosp.* 3 *Epiph.*

after inquiring into it, only proves more completely your contempt of its injunctions. If you had inquired into it properly, you must have found it to be of practical application : why then did you not practise accordingly ? To alledge unavoidable ignorance, would be your best apology ; nay, an actual, though faulty, ignorance might furnish you with some degree of excuse : but, if you own that you *knew your LORD's will and yet prepared not yourselves, neither did according to His will*--you bear witness against yourselves, that you deserve to be *beaten with many stripes.*

Nor will it suffice to state “that you had right notions of religion.” Understanding and acting can never be considered as equivalent, upon any principle of right judgment. In *believing in* GOD, you do well; but *the devils also believe and tremble*. In believing JESUS CHRIST to be the Son of GOD, you do well too; but the unclean spirits likewise made the same confession, and yet *they are reserved in everlasting chains under darkness*.

You may however perhaps affirm "that
D 3 you

you have actually done something in religion"; by attending regularly on public worship, or zealously defending the principles of your peculiar sects. Alas! I fear this zeal about circumstantialia will rather swell than abate the account. He, that searches the heart, sees perhaps that this boasted punctuality was only an artful veil thrown over base designs or evil actions; that this vaunted earnestness arose from self-confidence, impatience of contradiction, or concealed malignity of spirit: and can such pretences as these avail you before His dread tribunal? But allowing even the best, that your efforts were both well-meant and well-exerted, how will that expiate your guilt in other respects? Will the *tithing of mint and anise and cummin* atone for the omission of the *weightier matters of the law—judgment, and mercy, and faith?*

Or will you adduce "your fair moral character"? This indeed, if your obedience were perfect, would be allowed as valid. But I have proved, that your consciences must testify the contrary. And did your morality, my brethren, proceed from its only true

true principles, *Repentance toward GOD, and Faith toward our Lord JESUS CHRIST*, you would never think of appealing to it in your favour; but rather with deep humility would implore the divine pardon for those imperfections, with which it must always have been accompanied. Well then. You have not been an adulterer, a drunkard, a thief, or a murderer: be assured that He, before whom you stand, will not in that case condemn you for murder or theft or drunkenness or adultery. But you have forgotten your Almighty Father and Benefactor; you have despised the blood of your Redeemer, and *crucified Him afresh*: and for these you will be condemned. What you boast of as virtue, even supposing it to have been really such, was perhaps on most occasions its own reward. You remain therefore still subject to punishment for your actual offences; and your plea of good works (which yet how few are in any shape authorized to advance!) will be of as little avail to you, as that of a culprit, who should endeavour to save himself from the scaffold by stating that he

had been kind to his fellow-subjects, when he stood convicted of high-treason against his prince.

Perhaps you will say, "you did not expect that the consequences of your neglect would have been so fatal to you." And why did you trust the suggestions of your own light imaginations, in contradiction to the express word of God? Had you considered His character, or weighed His decrees, you would have seen the necessity of entertaining other expectations. "You did not think about religion." What did you think about? Or were you too much employed, to think seriously of any thing? How then were you employed? In affairs, do you suppose, of equal importance with your eternal welfare? But, whatever were those affairs, there have been frequent hours of leisure for religious meditation. You certainly have been instructed, and in plain language: you probably have been tried, and with heavy afflictions. All has failed. Reflection however shall at last overtake you, when trembling perhaps upon the confines of the grave;

grave ; and conscience will then be acknowledged as a tormentor, since she was not before admitted as a friend.

As a last allegation, you may represent the strength of your passions ; and assert “ that you were irresistibly impelled to things now imputed to you as crimes, which were therefore unavoidable.” And would you accept this excuse from a servant, who had plundered you of your property ? I think not. Nay, so far from offering it as an apology to God at the great day, you would not venture to convert it into a prayer even at this moment—“ O God, it is true I robbed and murdered my fellow-creatures ; but, with my feelings, I could not do otherwise ! I could as easily have shaken the foundations of the earth, or darkened the sun in the firmament, as have resisted the impulses by which I was actuated !” You would surely look upon such a declaration as heightening the enormity of your conduct, by affronting the supreme holiness of the Majesty of Heaven and Earth.

If all your excuses then, even the most plausible, can be thus easily silenced by a
weak

weak mortal like yourselves—how much more will they be dumb before your Creator! What can you therefore do in His presence, but *keep the door of your lips* under a deep sense of guilt, and listen to the sentence of His righteous law? You will most assuredly feel its execution, if the gospel do not deliver you from it; and you must feel something of its terrors, before you will apply to the gospel for deliverance.

With nothing to offer in arrest of judgment, hear the awful denunciation, the authentic threatening recorded in that word, which, *though heaven and earth pass away, will not pass away*. In language the most comprehensive it includes all offenders, and all offences: *curst is every one, that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them*. This confessedly you have not done; you are therefore obviously the objects of its condemnation: and, unless you embrace the conditions proposed to your acceptance, ere long it will *come into your bowels like water, and like oil into your bones*.

The

The soul that sinneth, it shall die—thus saith the LORD. You admit that you have sinned; and are therefore, by your own acknowledgment, under the sentence of death—and oh! what a death! The agonies of dissolving nature, which are usually bitterest to the sinner, are in many instances alarmingly dreadful: but, alas! all this solemn pomp and horror of dying form but the opening of the tremendous punishment. It is but the rough stroke, by which the fetters are knocked off, when the criminal is led to torture and execution.

The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget GOD—thus further saith the LORD. Even into that flaming prison, which divine vengeance hath prepared: *He hath made it deep and large; the pile thereof is fire and much wood; the breath of the LORD, like a stream of brimstone, doth kindle it; and it shall become a lake burning with fire and brimstone, for ever and ever.*

Such is the sentence denounced against sinners. And shall it stand upon record in vain? Shall the law speak it; shall the gospel repeat it; and shall it never be uttered

tered in a more audible and effectual manner? Ah! wretched men, notwithstanding any interposed delay, it will certainly be again pronounced; notwithstanding any temporary reprieve, it will certainly at last be executed: for the LORD *hath appointed a day, in the which He will judge the world in righteousness by that man, whom He hath ordained; whereof He hath given assurance unto all men, in that He hath raised Him from the dead.* You, even you, *shall appear before the judgment-seat of CHRIST*; and behold with trembling that terrible tribunal, the description of which has grown so familiar to you by its repetition, as to have wholly lost its effect.

And do you suppose (as some have wildly supposed) that the Redeemer will come again, only to recover His own people from the grave, and raise them to everlasting glory? Even that idea should make you endeavour to be one of them. But, whatever evidence we have for the resurrection of the just, we have the same likewise for that of the unjust; and CHRIST, we are informed, *shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats.*

Or do you imagine that He will only doom to punishment a few flagrant offenders; when it is said that *the dead, both small and great, shall stand before GOD*: and that even he, *that knew not* his Master's will (and who, consequently, seems to have the fairest excuse for not doing it) *shall be beaten, though with few stripes.*

Or (lastly) do you conjecture that the sentence, to be delivered with so much pomp and majesty, will be frivolous; or the vengeance, to which it shall consign sinners, inconsiderable?

But we are not left to supposition, or imagination, or conjecture. We are assured that *the King shall say unto them on His right hand—"Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world."* O joy unspeakable, and full of glory!—to be proclaimed "the Blessed of the Father"!—to be called to a "kingdom"!—to an immediate and everlasting "inheritance" of it!—and of such a kingdom! *Lively hope* indeed, to which we are begotten again by the resurrection of JESUS CHRIST from the dead, and
formed

formed by the sanctifying influences of the Holy Spirit !

But it is a hope, from which ye wicked, whosoever ye be, are at present excluded. To you there is no blessedness promised : for you no kingdom is prepared. On the contrary—He will say to you, and to all the impenitent and unbelieving, whatever be their rank or number ; to *the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men*, as well as to *every bondman, and every free-man*—“ *Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.*” Oh ! pause upon these dreadful words, and ponder them in your hearts. “ *Depart*”—to leave His presence with disgrace ; His, who is the source of life and Lord of Glory ! “ *Ye cursed*”—subject, in consequence of your transgressions, to a curse permanent and abiding ! “ *into everlasting fire*”—not merely into one fierce blaze which, though with exquisite agony, would consume you in a moment ; but into a place, where (as we are thrice, in compassion, informed by CHRIST in the same passage) *the*
worm

worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched: not indeed originally prepared, nor principally intended, for you; but for “the devil and his angels,” who will then be your companions and tormentors for ever and ever.

Is it I only, who say this? Does not the law, does not the gospel, does not the Lord JESUS CHRIST, *the faithful and true witness*, expressly declare it? And shall it not, thus authenticated, in due time be carried into effect? Who shall dare, even for a single instant, to surmise the contrary?

But, lest the heart of the sinner should beguile him into so idle an expectation, to the words of the sentence an assurance is immediately subjoined—the wicked *shall go away into everlasting punishment*. Then, on that very day, while the fearful sounds are still ringing in their ear; the gates of hell shall open to receive them, and shall close upon them—to open no more.

Now then, whoever you are, whose consciences tell you that you have *gone astray and done wickedly—prepare to meet your God*. Summon up all your resolution, for *He will not meet you as a man*, whose heart
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may

may sometimes relent, when about to execute a needful act of severity. No. His purposes are as immoveable as his throne. I therefore testify to you in His name this day—that, if He be true, He will thus speak; if He be able, He will thus act: and therefore (on the supposition of your continuance in sin) unless He be either false or powerless, that you will for ever be undone.

As you have not yet however, it may be hoped, finally rejected His gracious offers; as the sentence is still perhaps not so gone forth against you, as to be utterly irreversible—in my next discourse upon this subject, after shewing how insufficient you are of yourselves to escape from your dreadful situation, I shall endeavour to point out the mode assigned by the gospel for your deliverance.

Now to God, &c.

SERMON

SERMON IV.

—
THE SINNER, HELPLESS UNDER CONDEMNATION,
CAN BE
SAVED BY CHRIST ALONE.

—•••—
ACTS IV. 12.

*Neither is there salvation in any other : for
there is none other name under heaven given
among men, whereby we must be saved.*

THAT we all have sinned, and come short
of the glory of GOD ; that we are all
consequently at this instant condemned by
His justice, and indebted only to His mercy
for the suspension of our sentence ; and that
of ourselves we are totally incompetent either

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to

to procure a pardon, or to effect an escape—has been proved, I trust, to the conviction of you all. *What then, let me inquire, what will you do to be saved?*

When a criminal is condemned by human laws, how tenaciously does he cling to the smallest remnant of hope! How anxiously does he grasp at the very shadow of it! If he has a friend, who may by possibility give him any assistance, how fervently does he implore his interposition! And will you then, with such a sentence hanging over your heads, delay (while there is yet time) to take measures for your deliverance?

Yet what measures can be taken? Consider attentively; for it is an affair of moment. Wisdom and power and eloquence and interest, if you have any or all of them, can never be exerted upon a greater occasion. If then you can help yourselves; if you have any secret source of relief, any select sacrifice to offer, any reserved strength to exert; any thing, in short, whereby to extricate or to defend yourselves

yourselves—prepare them all. The justice of GOD is injured. What atonement can you make to it? *Wherewith will you come before the LORD, and bow yourselves before the high GOD? Will you come before Him with burnt-offerings, with calves of a year old? Will the LORD be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil?* Alas! were you as rich as Solomon, and like him able to make such sacrifices, Lebanon would not be sufficient to burn, nor all the beasts thereof sufficient for a burnt-offering.

Even under the Mosaic dispensation, the blood of bulls and of goats could not take away sin, nor purge the conscience before GOD: nay, the presumptuous sinner was condemned to die without mercy. And with him, as your consciences testify, have your transgressions ranked you.

Will you then give up yourselves to suffering, till you have made full satisfaction? But where, and how? By transient calamities, do you mean, confined to this world? And is the anger of the Deity esteemed so slight

a matter, that the sorrows of a few days may suffice to appease it? Or by heavier anguish, in the world to come? Alas! that is not deliverance. Thence indeed, when you have made full satisfaction, you will be released: when you have *paid the uttermost farthing*, your prison-doors will be opened. But trust not, expect not, that happy moment ever to arrive. That one part of the sentence, *everlasting fire*—that one phrase, *the worm dieth not*—must convert such an expectation into deep despair, and hopeless horror, and infinite dismay.

Or do you think future obedience will rescue you from the menaced vengeance? This, remember (if you are to depend upon it) must be undeviating, unspotted, complete; without inconstancy, without omission, without neglect: and dare you, enfeebled as you are both by original and habitual depravity, to undertake such an obedience for the whole of your remaining lives? In vain would you attempt it, even for a day.

But

But, were your future conduct as pure and perfect as God himself could require, would that (I pray you) cancel the offences, which are past? In the ordinary intercourse of the world, is it reckoned as a discharge of an old debt—not to contract a new one? I will not multiply words upon so plain a subject.

While I speak—time is flying, death is approaching, judgment is impending: and what can save, what can soothe you in those awful scenes?

Can the world, that vain idol of your affections and pursuits, render you any service? No. You know it will forsake you, when you most need its consolations: not one of its enjoyments, to which you are now sacrificing your eternal hopes, will accompany you into futurity; not so much as a trifle to remember it by, if you could even desire to remember so treacherous a friend as it has been to you.

Or can your sinful acquaintance assist you upon this awful occasion? Is there one

among them who, if he wished it, could give to GOD a ransom for you; could snatch you from death, or with-hold you from judgment? This they could not do, if they had themselves no crimes to answer for; but they are overwhelmed, wretched men! with their own condemnation. WHEN THOU CRIEST, LET THY COMPANIES DELIVER THEE: BUT THE WIND SHALL CARRY THEM ALL AWAY, VANITY SHALL TAKE THEM.*

The powers of darkness will have neither the ability, nor the inclination, to protect you. On the other hand, they have been watching and labouring for your destruction, and they will triumph in it. They can only confederate with you—for your ruin.

Will any celestial being then come forward to your rescue? This, after sentence is gone forth, would be an act of rebellion which they must all abhor: even those, who now most ardently seek and solicit your

* *Isai.* lvii. 13. occ. in I. Lesson 4 Epiph.

salvation—allied to you by the bonds of nature, of friendship, or of duty—even they must assent to, and approve the irreversible decree. At present they remonstrate, but ineffectually: they pray—alas! in vain—that you may prostrate yourselves before God in contrition of heart: and, renouncing all self-dependence, may entreat Him to instruct you in the mode of relief prescribed by the gospel.

Listen, I beseech you, while I endeavour to explain what I apprehend to be that mode of relief; arguing with all humility, I trust, from the language and spirit of the evangelists and apostles. What I have hitherto advanced, has been matter of painful communication: and nothing but necessity would have justified so ample a discussion of a subject so distressing. It is difficult indeed to conceive how he can presume to call himself a Christian, who takes pleasure in the sufferings even of a brute animal, much more in that of the

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human

human heart—especially such sufferings, as the scriptural account of the death and judgment of sinners must excite in every considerate mind. With high satisfaction therefore I now proceed to state that,

Though you have destroyed yourselves, yet in GOD is your help.—I bring you good tidings of great joy. Your gracious GOD has declared, that He is in CHRIST reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them.

This is the most important message ever sent from heaven to earth; and, though I doubt not that (living, as you have done, in a Protestant country) you have heard it frequently, perhaps a thousand and a thousand times, I will with all plainness repeat it again to you; and if you now for the first time should happily feel its importance, then will it, however familiar to your ear, appear a new gospel unto you. Some in this congregation, it is most probable, at all events are yet but imperfectly acquainted with

with its doctrines; though their eternal all depends upon their knowing, and receiving, and cherishing them. It is my duty then (and, I hope, I shall not have laboured ineffectually in the discharge of it) to take care that such shall not have it in their power to plead, at the great tribunal, that they were never fully and faithfully taught salvation by JESUS CHRIST—*the way, and the truth, and the life*; by whom alone *we come unto the Father*.

Upon the fatal apostasy of man, GOD did not with inflexible severity consign his whole race to perdition—CONTENDING FOR EVER, AND BEING ALWAYS WROTH; FOR THE SPIRIT WOULD HAVE FAILED BEFORE HIM, AND THE SOULS WHICH HE HAD MADE*: but, on the contrary, determined to enter into a treaty of reconciliation with them; and to publish explicit offers of life and happiness in the method, which He judged most suitable to the purity

* *Isai.* lvii. 16. occ. in I. Lesson 4 Epiph.

of His own nature and government. He determined to send His own Son into the world—the *brightness of His glory, and the express image of His person*—to be not merely a teacher of righteousness, and a messenger of the covenant; but also a sacrifice for sin: not only to live and labour, but to die, in the cause of human salvation.

Accordingly, when divine Wisdom thought fit, *in the fulness of the time*, the Redeemer appeared upon earth; and after a life of toil and suffering succeeded by an ignominious death, having been *delivered for our offences, was raised again for our justification*. After his resurrection, the truth of which was proved by the most irresistible evidence, He ascended into heaven in the sight of many of His followers; leaving it in charge to them and their successors, to *preach the gospel to every creature; that whosoever believed in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life*.

Let us consider what CHRIST thus endured for our sakes! *Made a spectacle to the world*

world, and to angels, and to men; His back mangled with scourges, His temples lacerated with thorns, and His soul as well as His limbs pierced with the iron; suspended in the midst of pain and mockery, of agony and insult! Let us ask ourselves, what has entitled us to such condescension—that He should be wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities; and that the chastisement of our peace should be upon Him!

Be it known unto you, men and brethren, that through this Man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins. CHRIST was made to be sin for you, who knew no sin, that you might be made the righteousness of God in Him; that through His atonement and obedience you might be not only pardoned, but received into favour. To you is the word of this salvation sent; to you its blessings are offered: so that, notwithstanding your heavy guilt in having broken the law of God, it is not that which shall prove your ruin—unless you likewise reject His gospel. It is
not

not that legion of sins, which rise up in battle-array against you, that shall be able to destroy you—if unbelief do not lead them on, and impenitence bring up the rear. *He that believeth on the Son* (i. e. he who believeth, so as to obey) *hath everlasting life.—There is therefore now no condemnation to them, which are in CHRIST JESUS; who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.*

You have doubtless offended greatly, and under circumstances of the most heinous aggravation: but you may rejoice in the assurance that, where *sin hath abounded*, there *shall grace much more abound: that, as sin hath reigned unto death* with most unlimited sway, with most unresisted triumph, *even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by JESUS CHRIST our Lord.* He, if the offers of His gospel be accepted, will break the chain, in which you are tied and bound by your sins; will clothe you in the robes of holiness; will seat you upon thrones of glory, where you shall reign in immortal joy and beauty—without one
visible

visible mark of divine displeasure, without one remaining scar, by which it could be known that you had ever been obnoxious to wrath and a curse; unless indeed it be that anthem of praise to *Him that loved you, and washed you from your sins in His own blood.*

Reflect then, my brethren, upon these gracious tidings; and say, whether the Saviour, by whom they were brought, may not be properly denominated *Wonderful, Counsellor*—when He displays before you such wonders of love, when He proposes to you such counsels of peace!

And did He indeed leave the magnificence and the joys of heaven, in compassion to sinful and perishing man? Oh! had He, from the height of his glory and felicity, looked down upon us but for a moment, and vouchsafed to send us by the least of His servants the message of salvation!—had He, after condescending to be Himself the messenger, immediately return-

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ed back to His Father's throne—justly might we have prostrated ourselves before Him in grateful admiration! But that he should have deigned to visit earth; and, after years of penury and obscurity, should have died as a malefactor upon the cross—thus making atonement to injured justice, and *redeeming us to GOD by His own blood*—this it seems to put faith to the utmost stretch to admit, as it exceeds the utmost stretch of the imagination to conceive.

Blessed, for ever blessed be thy name, O Thou who wast slain for our redemption! Grant, we beseech Thee, that we may not *receive this thy grace in vain!* Impress thy gospel upon our souls, till it be not only heard and acknowledged and professed, but felt and embraced and practised! Make it *thy power to our salvation*; and elevate us to that active gratitude, to that unwearied zeal in thy service, which become those to whom *so much is forgiven*, and forgiven upon such merciful conditions! Oh! suffer not the glow of heart, which these tidings may
create,

create, to be a slight and superficial transport; but teach us to secure this glorious hope, this undeserved blessing in thy appointed method: and let us not mistake the joy of nature, catching a glimpse of its rescue from destruction, for that consent of grace which accepts and ensures its deliverance.

Now to God, &c.

circle, to be a light and intellectual trans-
 port; but teach us to learn this glorious
 hope, the undelivered blessing in the ap-
 pointed method: and let us not mistake the
 joy of nature, carrying a rhyme of its re-
 fine from definition, for that content of
 grace which accepts and counts its best.

New York, Dec.

SERMON V.

SALVATION BY CHRIST EXPLAINED,

AND
ENFORCED.

TIT. III. 5.

Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us ; by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost.

AFTER representing in the two first discourses of this series your obligations to God, and your neglect of Him—a neglect rendered more dangerous by the precariousness of human life, and the usual tendency of accumulated and aggravated provocation ; which however should natu-
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rally, on the other hand, incite you to immediate repentance and amendment—I proceeded, in my third, to consider the various pleas occasionally alledged by finners in their own behalf: such as—their descent from Christian parents; their having often thought seriously upon religion; perhaps thought justly upon it; their punctual and zealous regard for religious services; their freedom from gross immorality, and their not having anticipated such fatal consequences from their neglect. And, after endeavouring to shew you that all these excuses were *lighter than vanity*, I stated the particulars of the awful sentence reserved for the impenitent and unbelieving—a curse written in the law, denouncing against them instant consignment to eternal death. I then, in my fourth, urged you to reflect upon some means of escape; and to determine for yourselves whether it could be effected by any thing you were able to offer, or to suffer in this world, or (short of infinite suffering) in the next; by future
fulfil-

fulfilment of duty, even supposing you capable of it, of which however, both from original and habitual depravity, you are wholly incapable; by alliance with fellow-sinners on earth or in hell, or by the interposition of the celestial powers in your favour. And judging it impossible that you should not agree with me in pronouncing all those projects hopeless, I explained to you in brief and general terms what I apprehended, from the language and spirit of the inspired writers, to be the mode of relief prescribed by the gospel, viz. that *you should believe on (believe on, so as to obey) the Son of God.*

“ But what are the particulars of the conduct, whereby we may attain the salvation purchased by CHRIST for his people”? Such is the question probably arising in your minds, from this review of what has been already advanced upon the subject. And I will attempt to answer it, as one knowing its importance to the inquirer, and my own awful responsibility: I will declare to you the doctrine preached by the apostles, which

no man may pretend to alter—except at the peril of his own soul, and of theirs who hear him.

Convinced then of your guilt, your condemnation, and your utter inability to redeem yourselves—you must renounce all self-dependence. *He that glorieth, must glory in the LORD*; for of *Him are we in CHRIST JESUS, who of GOD is made unto us wisdom and righteousness and sanctification and redemption*. You must be sensible that, as sinners, you have none of these in yourselves; and can therefore only derive them from another. Hear then in a few words your duty, your remedy, and your safety.

You must apply to CHRIST—deeply abhorring your former sins, and firmly resolving to forsake them: resolving however in the strength of His grace, and relying wholly upon Him for your acceptance with GOD; not only when you are purposing to do the best, but when you have actually done the very best in consequence of that purpose.

You must apply to CHRIST—not saying
in

in your hearts, Who shall ascend into heaven (that is, to bring Him down from above)? Or, Who shall descend into the deep (that is, to bring Him up again from the dead)? Forgotten as He is by most of those, who call themselves His followers, He is *not far from every one of us* : For where two or three are gathered together in His name, there is He in the midst of them. And do you not already feel your folly, that for the sake of such paltry and sordid gratifications, as you have been pursuing, you should have *killed the Prince of Life*? What past indulgence of yours was so dear, as to deserve that He should die for it? What future temptation can arise so powerful, that you should say—"For the sake of this *I will crucify Him afresh, and put Him to an open shame*"?

If however you would forsake your sins to any purpose, you must do it at the foot of the cross. There must every lust be sacrificed, though it should be like a *right hand* or a *right eye*; for great was the sacrifice made for your redemption—not corrup-

tible things, as silver and gold ; but the precious blood of CHRIST.

For the ability to forsake them, you must pray unto the Father, through the mediation of the Son, to give you the assistance of His Holy Spirit. You must solicit the power of *believing on Him, whom GOD hath sent ; and, knowing whom you have believed, you must be persuaded that He is able to keep that which you have committed to Him against that day.*

No man (saith CHRIST Himself) *No man cometh unto the Father, but by Me.* To Him then apply. Apply too, just as you are : for, if you wait till you are first righteous and holy, you will never apply to Him ; unless indeed there were some way of becoming righteous and holy without Him, in which case the application would be altogether unnecessary. But this would be, as if a man mortally sick should determine to decline the aid of a physician, until his health were restored to him ; and afterwards to request the favour of his superfluous attendance !

*Come unto Me (saith CHRIST Himself)
Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy
laden, and I will give you rest:—and Him,
that cometh to Me, I will in no wise cast out.*

Under sentence therefore, as we are at this moment, for our numerous offences; without treasure to ransom, without equivalent to offer for our souls; on Him, who is *alone sure and stedfast*, let us fix our confidence—submitting ourselves to His precepts; relying upon His atonement, His righteousness, and His intercession; and willingly, cheerfully obeying His instructions.

Such must be the language of your hearts before the LORD; but such also, if you would have a chance for salvation, such must be the language of your lives. The unmeaning words of the lips are criminal mummery. The mere transport of the passions resembles only a blaze of straw presented, instead of incense, at His altar. With humility indeed, and love, and cordial self-dedication you should prostrate your-

selves before CHRIST; but you must also live unto GOD through Him—*denying ungodliness, and worldly lusts; and living soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world.* YE MUST RUN, THAT YE MAY OBTAIN*; and shew forth your love by your obedience, by forming yourselves upon the temper and conduct of your high pattern. To imitate your Saviour should be the great object of your ambition: a greater you cannot have. Make this therefore your constant care, your unceasing aim, your invariable endeavour. Follow, whither He leads—even with a cross upon your shoulders, if He commands; and so *be faithful unto death, expecting at His hands a crown of life.*

This, as far as I am able to understand the word of GOD, this is your way to safety and to glory; your surest, your only way. Consider then seriously, I entreat you, what has been said; and let your consciences answer, as in the presence of GOD, whe-

* 1 Cor. ix. 24. occ. in Epist. Septuag.

ther you are willing to pursue it or not. But know that not to pursue it, after it has been thus plainly pointed out to you, will be your eternal ruin: for we have divine authority in asserting, that *there is none other name under heaven given among men* (except that of JESUS) *whereby we must be saved.*

The corrupt heart will at first be tempted to exclaim—" *This is a hard saying, who can hear it ?* To be thus humbled and mortified, to give up every darling lust, to subject myself to another's discipline, to have my favourite pursuits and appetites controlled, to adhere to the rigid rules of godliness and sobriety—without departing from them in any instance, great or small, upon any temptation however powerful; nay, to owe the ability and obligation of all this obedience to another, to be stripped of every high pretence to self-righteousness, of every proud hope of reaching heaven by my own exertions"—these and similar considerations,

aided

aided by that inward reluctance, which the deceitfulness of sin naturally produces, will often resist strong convictions and weaken deep impressions. Hear me then further my brethren; while, *as though God did beseech you by me, I pray you in CHRIST's stead, be ye reconciled to God.*

One would indeed imagine, that there could be no need of importunity here: that, as soon as sinners are told—their offended Father is ready to be reconciled, offers them a full pardon, and proposes on certain conditions to receive them again as His children, they would with rapture embrace the gracious terms of forgiveness and acceptance. And yet we see multitudes unmoved by them, or moved only with feeble and transitory sensations.

I entreat you then by the majesty of that God, whose voice fills the heavens with reverence, who speaks not in vain to legions of angels, O let Him not speak in vain to wretched mortals. By the terrors of His wrath, which could in an instant cut
off

off your precarious lives from His presence : by His tender mercies, which are still active towards you, as those of a parent towards his offspring ; whom, notwithstanding their ungrateful rebellion, *he earnestly remembers still*—do not compel him to lose the gentle Father in the righteous and inflexible Judge.

By the name and love of a dying Saviour : by that humility, to which He voluntarily submitted, *that ye through His poverty might be rich* with eternal treasures : by His urgent and affectionate invitations : by His splendid works of magnificence and of wonder : by the memory of the kindest benefactor, and of the most generous friend : by the recollection not only of what He said and did, but of what He suffered—His agony ; the distress He endured, when all *the disciples forsook Him and fled* ; and the anguish preceding, and attending His crucifixion : by the triumphs of that resurrection, by which He was *declared to be the Son of God with power* : by His glorious ascension
into

into heaven ; and by His sending down of the Comforter, in a rich profusion of miraculous gifts——by the recollection, in short, of all that He hath already done, and by the hope of all that He will farther do for you : by His sceptre of grace ; and by His sword of justice, with which His incorrigible enemies shall be *slain before Him*——trifle not away, I implore you, these precious moments ; which are even now rapidly upon the wing, and on the proper improvement of which your eternity depends.

By the regard of your living, and by the memory of your departed friends : by the ruin of those who, after a life of negligence, have perished in their sins ; and by the happiness of those who embraced the gospel, and are saved by it : by the expectation of that important day, when *the Lord JESUS shall be revealed in glory* : by that alarm which will be felt, when *the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat* : by the awful hour, when *the LORD himself shall descend*
with

with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God; and by those solemn sentences of "Come, ye blessed", and "Depart, ye cursed", which shall close the dread solemnity, and consign you to eternal happiness or misery——think, I beseech you, think upon these things.

Finally—by your own immortal souls: by the sure prospect of a dying bed; or the still more terrifying one of a sudden surprisal into the invisible state, and as you would secure one spark of comfort for your departing spirits, when *your flesh and your heart faileth*: by your own personal appearance before the tribunal of CHRIST; and by those transports or those agonies, the one or the other of which must be your everlasting portion——by all these united considerations; as you will answer it to your own consciences, and to your Omniscient Judge—dismiss not, I conjure you, these important subjects, till you have brought them to a happy issue: till you have determined to pursue the appointed way of salvation, and
solemnly

solemnly devoted yourselves to God in the bonds of an *everlasting covenant*.

And can you—notwithstanding this variety of motive, this importunity of persuasion, by which you are courted to receive forgiveness and happiness and glory—can you, with many others, still determine to refuse them? Can you still reject your redemption, and slight your Redeemer? Can you, with some few—in order to sooth an upbraiding conscience, or display a proud superiority of understanding—still more impiously, trample upon the gospel; spurning its message, and ridiculing its divine Messenger! Can you, still more impiously, determine not only to renounce all subjection to, and expectation from JESUS of *Nazareth*; but also seriously endeavour to destroy all regard for Him in the minds of others; to wrest from them those high hopes, which give its purest zest to prosperity, and to sorrow its most substantial consolation—in calm and steady defiance of that moment,
when

when He shall appear with so much majesty and terror to execute His threatened vengeance, and *pour out His fury upon his enemies, to consume them?* Go then, and pervert, and burlesque the Scripture, Go, lampoon the characters of its heroes, and vilify the sublime discourses of its prophets and its apostles; as some have done, who have left little behind them but the paltry monuments of their ignorance, their profaneness, and their malignity. Go, spread like them the banners of infidelity, and pique yourselves upon the number of your credulous followers. But take heed, lest the insulted *Galilean* direct a secret arrow to your heart; and stop your licentious breath, before it has finished the next sentence you would utter against Him.

Here I must leave the matter before you, and before the LORD: stronger arguments I cannot use; more endearing, more awful incentives I cannot suggest. Chuse therefore, whether you will cast yourselves
(clothed,

(clothed, as it were, in sackcloth) at the feet of Him, who thus offers you pardon and acceptance: or whether you will hardly hold it out, till He appear to reckon with you for all your instances of rebellion and ingratitude; and, amongst the rest of them, for this neglected embassy.

Now to God, &c.

SERMON

SERMON VI.

THE STUBBORN, THE DISMAYED,

AND

THE DOUBTFUL ADDRESSED.

EZEK. XVIII. 31.

Why will ye die, O house of Israel?

NOTWITHSTANDING all that may have been hitherto urged in the five preceding discourses, with regard to the necessity of your attending to the claims of religion (I.), and that immediately—before delay harden, or death place you beyond the power of repentance; impressed, as your consciences necessarily must be, by the deep and awful conviction of guilt (II.): notwithstanding the evident delusiveness of all those excuses and hopes, by which you may

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foolishly

foolishly have supported yourselves against the fear of the alarming sentence denounced upon sinners (iii.): notwithstanding your utter incapacity by any power of your own to escape the execution of it, and attain pardon or salvation (iv.); which, according to the express declarations of Scripture, are attainable only by Faith in CHRIST JESUS, and Good Works wrought through the influence of that faith (v):—notwithstanding all this, it is but too possible (I fear) that there may still remain many in this congregation, with regard to whom every thing which has been urged—of obligation, of hazard, of terror, of love, and of duty—has been in a great measure, if not wholly, ineffectual.

Here therefore, if such there unfortunately be, I must leave them—indisposed to the gospel, and self-deprived of all chance of eternal happiness.

But I would previously inquire, Sirs, and be the answers returned to your respective consciences—Why you are so indisposed to the gospel? Do you secretly disbelieve any of the great principles of religion? If so, how far do your scruples extend?

extend?—to some particular doctrines only, which have been chiefly insisted upon in these discourses?—or to the whole revelation of Christianity?—or, still farther, to the conclusions of natural as well as of revealed religion; so as to make you doubt, whether there be any God and providence and future state, or not? I would again ask—How long these scruples have continued, and what plans you have adopted for their removal?

You must not neglect to examine the gospel-evidence; and then expect to have your plea of wanting satisfactory proof admitted, as a sufficient excuse for not acting upon the gospel-precepts. Common sense will assure you that, if these things be true (and, when you doubt, you acknowledge it at least possible that they may), they are infinitely more important than any worldly affairs, either of business or of pleasure, for the sake of which they are so generally disregarded. Why then do you *stand idle*—not only *all the day*, but day after day and year after year? Do you ask, what methods you shall pursue to get rid of your

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scruples?

scruples? Open your eyes, and ears; exercise your minds; read; think; listen. In short, study religion as for your lives: alas! much more than life depends upon it. Weigh the design and tendency of the New Testament; see whither it will lead those, who cordially obey it: and then say, whether it be not good.

Neither is it more good than true. If it were false indeed, it would be most impiously and cruelly so: no less than a scheme to mock God, and to ruin men; even the best of men, men disposed to endure all extremities for what they mistakingly apprehend to be truth.

“There are difficulties in the way.” And what then? Have those difficulties never been surmounted? Or are they, in reality, the only grounds of your hesitation? Is it not rather because *you do evil*, that you *hate the light, neither come to the light; lest your deeds should be reprov'd*. But there is a light, the painful scrutiny of which they shall be compelled to undergo.

You would not (as I once before expressed my trust, and belief) upon any terms whatever,

ever, come to a determination resolutely from this hour to dismiss all further idea of religion, and risque the consequences. And why? Because you have some lurking fear that this rejected gospel may after all prove true. Do not then, I beseech you, fearing that it may be true, act as if it were certainly and demonstrably false. Remember, it is possible that *haply ye may be found even to fight against God*: that, though you defy the *terror of the LORD*, you may at last fall into His hands; and hear from His lips that now-despised sentence, at a time when you will not be able to despise it—"Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels."

If however you admit JESUS to be the CHRIST, and *to have the words of eternal life*, why do you turn away from Him? Whither *will you go*? Calling Him LORD, LORD, *why do you not the things, which He says*?

If I had been urging any controverted point, it might have altered the case. But surely it is no matter of controversy among Christians, whether there be a great and

holy God or not; and whether such a one should be loved or dishonoured, revered or neglected. It is surely no matter of controversy, whether a wicked man should seriously repent of his sins, or wilfully persist in them; whether CHRIST *was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification*, or not; and whether we should embrace that justification, or reject it. Are His precepts written so obscurely, as to leave room for questioning—whether He requires a devout, humble, spiritual, watchful, self-denying life, or allows the contrary? Has He, who *brought life and immortality to light*, left the happiness and misery connected with that state uncertain; or left uncertain, for whom that happiness and misery are respectively intended? Can we question, whether God will or will not *bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, good and evil*: or whether, at the conclusion of that judgment, *the wicked shall or shall not go away into everlasting punishment, and the righteous into life eternal*?

You cannot pretend a doubt about any of these subjects, and yet continue to call yourselves

selves Christians. Why then do you not lay them to heart, and act as both your duty and your interest so evidently and so urgently require?

Because you are blinded with the pomps and vanities of the world, and the lusts of the flesh; because your imaginations are deluded by some perishing trifle—dearer to you than God and His Son, dearer to you than your soul's salvation. *Ye will not come to CHRIST, that ye might have life; and therefore CHRIST has pronounced, that ye shall die in your sins.*

Yet as *Moses*, on leaving *Pharaoh's* presence for the last time, denounced to him that great cry, which the sword of the destroying angel should raise throughout all the land of Egypt; so must you now, finally, be warned of that much more terrible sword of divine vengeance, already bathed in heaven and preparing against you. Would that you could be roused to some efforts by any expostulations!—that you could be awakened by any remonstrances from your disastrous security!

Seek what amusements, my brethren, pursue what diversions you please—*your pomp must be brought down to the grave, and the noise of your viols; the worm shall be spread under you, and the worms shall cover you: for the end of these things is death.* Accessible, like others, to disease and accident—you, who now despise CHRIST and his gospel, will one day droop and languish; and all your relish for worldly recreations and vain companions expire. You will then reflect with pain upon what is past, and still more painfully anticipate what is to come. Trembling and astonished, you may then probably begin in wild consternation to inquire—*What you must do to be saved?* Or, flattering yourselves with idle hopes of recovery (even *against hope*) you may perhaps even then still defer serious reflection, from regard to your weakened and sinking spirits. These scenes however are but the fore-runners of others, still more dreadful: O who can describe, who may imagine them! While your friends are weeping over your breathless body, before it is deposited in the dark and silent

grave, whither, alas! is the soul fled? What new prospects have opened upon her, since her departure? And what will be your agonies at that still remoter period—when, upon the sound of the archangel's trumpet, that soul and body shall be reunited in a way enabling them to endure torments, which in this mortal state would have occasioned their instant dissolution. You will not at present be persuaded to come to CHRIST, but then you must of necessity behold him; if that indeed may be called beholding—when, instead of venturing to look upon *Him whom you have pierced*, you will say to the mountains “*Fall on us,*” and to the hills “*Cover us!*” Then we shall see how courageously *your hearts will endure*, and how strong *your hands will be*, in the days that *He shall deal with you*: when He pronounces the terrible sentence, consigning you to the worm which dieth not, and to the fire which is not quenched. Oh! my brethren, who among us can dwell with everlasting burnings?

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Some one may perhaps exclaim, "It is enough; do not further aggravate my distress. That sentence, terrible as it is—that sentence, I feel convinced to my eternal agony, is mine; *for my sins have reached unto heaven.* I have, long enjoyed the advantage of hearing the merciful invitations of the gospel; yet has my heart been so obdurate as to neglect those invitations, and thereby render that advantage ineffectual. It is more than sufficient, that God has borne with me so long; and every additional hour's reprieve does not imply kindness on His part more fully, than it excites surprise on mine. His messages to me have been no messages of salvation: in His word are high and precious promises, but to me they are *as a sealed book.* As CHRIST has offered, so I believe He is able, to save; but that He should be willing to save me, who have hitherto neglected His offers—this I know not how to believe: I acknowledge, however, that it is not absolutely impossible; and therefore I do not entirely despair."

Permit

Permit me to ask you—What reason you have for all these passionate complaints, this vehement self-accusation? Why do you conclude so harshly against yourselves, when the gospel addresses you so graciously? You know indeed more fully the corruption of your own hearts, than of the hearts of others: but, supposing the worst, *is any thing too hard for the LORD?* Are any sins, which admit of repentance, so deep in grain or so black in dye, that the blood of CHRIST cannot wash them out? It would certainly be most daring folly *to sin, that grace might abound*: yet whatever may have been your past wickedness—if from this moment, through the divine assistance, you resolve to offend no more—who shall *limit the Holy One of Israel?* St. Paul says that he, although the *chief of sinners, obtained mercy; that in him first JESUS CHRIST might shew forth all long-suffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on Him to life everlasting.*

Dismayed then already, as you may be, and terrified at the heinousness of your sins, do not add to their weight and number

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ber—by distrusting the faithfulness of the Redeemer, and thwarting all the purposes of his love.) Who is it, that you dread; and whom do you tremble to approach? Even Him, who came expressly to *call sinners to repentance; to seek and to save that which was lost; and to give light to those who sate in darkness, and in the shadow of death!* Be assured that, if one offender can promise himself a more certain welcome than another, it is not He who is in his own apprehension least guilty and least miserable; but he, who feels the deepest humiliation and self-abasement under a sense of his misery and guilt, and depends most firmly upon his Saviour for their removal.

Let me here however most anxiously caution you against mistaking transient impressions of mind, or even temporary amendment of life, for thorough renewal of heart. This may beguile you into false peace, and fatal security. THE ROCK RECEIVED THE SEED WITH JOY; and, by the early vigour of its produce, seemed to announce a plentiful harvest: but, BECAUSE IT LACKED
MOISTURE,

MOISTURE, that is, IN TIME OF TEMPTATION, IT WITHERED AWAY *. Whether your change of feelings and conduct be equally delusive or not, can alone be ascertained by the sincerity and continuance of your Faith in CHRIST, as above interpreted—a Faith, combining repentance for past sins with the steady purpose of future and universal obedience; of which, wherever it is real, Faith is the vital principle.

Suffer me therefore, with the view of facilitating your judgment upon this important subject, to inquire of you, or rather to entreat that you would each inquire of yourselves—What views you have had of sin, and what purposes you have felt with regard to it? It once undoubtedly wore a flattering aspect, a fair and fascinating appearance: and you have since perhaps with abhorrence felt it (as all will sometime or other feel it) *bite like a serpent, and sting like an adder*. So far it is well. But let me ask, whence arose this abhorrence? From self-love alone, because you had thereby brought condemnation and ruin upon your

* *Luke* viii. 6, 13. occ. in Gosp. Sexag.

souls?

souls? Was there no sense of its deformity, of its baseness, of its ingratitude—as committed against an all-perfect, all-powerful and all-bounteous Benefactor? And, as for your purposes with regard to it, how have they been formed; how executed? Have they been conceived, not against one or a few, but against every sin? Have they been resolute; yet, while resolute, humble? Are you irreconcilably active in this warfare? If so, what are *the fruits worthy of repentance*, which you have *brought forth*? Have you *ceased to do evil*? Are you *learning to do well*? Have you such an unfeigned antipathy to all sin, as to guard against every occasion and temptation to it? Do you particularly double your watchfulness against that, *which most easily besets you*, your darling indulgence? and have you fully resolved, with the aid of Divine Grace, never again to return to it?

Let me demand further—What views you have had of CHRIST? Do you feel that it is not enough to pay to Him a kind of distant and transient homage, as to a benevolent person, whose name and memory you
 reverence;

reverence ; but that you must depend upon Him, for matters of the highest and most inestimable consequence to you.

Have you considered Him, as *taking away the sin of the world*? And despairing of being justified by any righteousness of your own, and NOT PUTTING YOUR TRUST IN ANY THING THAT YOU DO*, have you submitted yourselves unto the righteousness of God? Are you in short convinced that, if ever you are saved at all, it must be through CHRIST? Have you surrendered your souls into His hands, to be governed by the dictates of His word, and by the influences of His Spirit—that He may discipline them upon earth for his glory; and afterwards receive them, amongst the number of His faithful servants, into the paradise above?

If you have done, or are ready to do so—faithfully, deliberately, determinately—then may you be pronounced a sincere disciple, delivered from the powers of darkness: then may you feel confident that your *sins are forgiven*, and *depart in peace*.

But, if you are yet strangers to these feel-

* Occ. in Coll. Sexag.

ings,

ings and this reformation, which I have been describing—however you may have been awakened and alarmed; whatever resolutions of amendment you may have adopted; how right soever your notions of religion, how pure soever your forms of worship, how ardent soever your zeal, how humane soever your temper may have been—the great work alas! is still undone. If you are not humbled by your consciousness of sin; if you have not declared open and mortal war against it; if you have not felt a sense of absolute dependence upon CHRIST, a necessity of earnest application to Him, and of a total submission of yourselves to His disposal; and if you do not, after all this acknowledge that you are *unprofitable servants*, who only expect acceptance through His righteousness and by His atonement—the *wrath of God abideth on you*: your hopes are unsubstantial, and you are *building upon the sand*. The edifice already raised must be thrown down again, and a new foundation laid; or you will shortly, I fear, be swept away with it into everlasting ruin.

Now to God, &c.

SERMON

SERMON VII.

THE CHRISTIAN TEMPER,
TO BE PURSUED BY THE AID OF DIVINE GRACE,
IN OPPOSITION TO EVERY DISCOURAGEMENT.

II PET. I. 5—8.

Giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue, knowledge; and to knowledge, temperance; and to temperance, patience; and to patience, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, charity. For, if these things be in you and abound, they make you, that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord JESUS CHRIST.

TO any one, duly weighing the infinite importance of religious inquiry, it must appear in the highest degree difficult to address mankind upon the subject of their
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eternal interests, with adequate earnestness and solicitude. Conformably however to my original plan, I shall proceed to give you a more detailed view of the several particulars comprized in the genuine Christian temper and character.

Happy you will be, happy beyond expression, if you can pronounce under each head as I advance—"This is my temper and character:" happy in no inconsiderable degree, if you can pronounce only—"This is what I anxiously desire and pursue, though what I have not yet been able fully to attain."

Know then in general that, to be Christians indeed, you must have been *renewed in the spirit of your mind*—your conduct universally reformed, your views and apprehensions of things totally altered, your objects and ends and affections entirely changed: for *the new man, after God, is created in righteousness and true holiness*. Examine yourselves therefore minutely, *whether these things be so*.

In order to be Christians likewise, the same *mind must be in you, which was also in*
CHRIST.

CHRIST. Search then into His life and disposition, as delineated in the gospel ; and compare them with your own. Have you any of his devotion, His love, His resignation towards GOD ?—any of His humility, His meekness, His benevolence towards man ?—any of His purity, His patience, His zeal, His fortitude, His contempt of the world ?

Further, to be Christians, you must be *spiritually-minded*—as knowing *that to be life and peace*. Your thoughts, your pursuits, your occupations influenced by a regard to the things of the future world—you must *walk by faith, not by sight*. That faith must act upon invisible, and what are to be regarded as in some degree incomprehensible objects : upon the being, perfection, providence, precepts and denunciations of GOD ; the redemption of mankind by CHRIST ; and the gracious influences of the Divine Spirit.

But these views of the Christian temper and character are perhaps too vague and indefinite, to admit of useful application. I will consider them therefore more particu-

larly, without observing the precise order of the virtues mentioned in the text, under three distinct heads—as relating to the Deity, to yourselves, and to your fellow-creatures.

With reference to those, which concern the Deity; to that *godliness which is profitable unto all things, and hath promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come*—do you find in your hearts that reverential fear, that supreme love of God, which a due reflection upon His power and His benevolence must necessarily inspire? Do you seek to pay an unreserved obedience to all His commands, to exhibit an unqualified submission to all his allotments? Do you study, in short, *to worship Him in spirit and in truth*?

Again—Is your faith in CHRIST sincere, and your affection towards Him consequently fervent? Is your observation of His charges strict, your regard for His interests zealous, your attendance upon His institutions regular, your desire of being *with Him where He is* unremitting? Do you rejoice in His glorious design of redemption, and its no-less-glorious accomplishment?

ment?—in the promises of His word?—in the privileges of His people? Finally—Are you solicitous to be *filled with the Spirit*, and to have every faculty of your souls subject to His authority? Do you abstain from those sins which tend to grieve Him: and desire His influence, as the Spirit of Adoption—to give cordiality to your worship, vigour to your obedience, ardour to your love, and continuance to your resignation; as the Spirit of Courage—to inspire you with heroism against the powers of darkness, the corruption of your own hearts, and the outward difficulties which often obstruct the progress of the Christian pilgrim?

Upon the subject of duties, relating more immediately to yourselves—do you prefer the soul to the body, things eternal to things temporal? And, conscious of the dignity and value of your immortal part, have you determined at all events, and by any sacrifice, to consult its eternal happiness?

Are you also *clothed with humility*, from a deep sense of your own depravity; of your limited knowledge, your feeble resolutions, and your imperfect services?

Do you labour after purity ; and endeavour to guard not only your words and actions, but even your wishes, from every distant appearance and probable occasion of evil ?

With a view to this, are you temperate in all your indulgencies ; so as neither to debase the talents, nor to squander the time or the wealth, bestowed for nobler purposes ?

Do you feel contented with that state of life, unto which it has pleased GOD to call you—not envying others their successes, nor repining at your own disappointments : but remembering always that both are equally the dispensation of Providence ; that, at the worst, your lot is far better than the best have deserved ; and that its inconveniences, if properly supported, will most probably conduce to the advancement of your future felicity ? To contentment have you ad-

ded patience ? Are your minds calm under affliction and injury ; and steady in the fulfilment of duty, notwithstanding *hopes deferred* and *desires unaccomplished* ? Do you *commit the keeping of your souls to GOD in well-doing* ; and, under every variety of circumstance, amidst long and painful vicissitudes of

of misfortune—with your natural spirits enfeebled, and unlawful methods of redress within your reach—do you wait quietly for deliverance, in His own time and way?

Lastly, with respect to the duties regarding your fellow-creatures. These are *briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.* In the bosom of the real Christian no irregular selfishness, no unauthorized attention to private interest is to be found. If therefore you be Christians, you will study the welfare and necessities of another; as you would wish him, under an exchange of situations, to study yours. You will give the kindest construction to his dubious expressions, or conduct; and will sympathize equally in his happiness, and in his distress.

Further, as Christians, you *will put on meekness*: not angry without or beyond just cause, nor provoking and exasperating by rough words or violent treatment those, whom you should rather study to conciliate by tenderness and affection. Behaving with modesty and propriety in your appointed station towards your superiors, your equals,

and your inferiors—you will, even in religion itself, refrain from all immoderate censures; and subdue that *wrath of man* which, instead of *working*, so often opposes the *righteousness of God*.

With this disposition likewise is naturally connected a love of peace, which the true Christian, *as much as lieth in him*, will always endeavour to promote and to preserve: not only cautious in giving, and slow to take offence; but solicitous to cherish kindness when vigorous, to sustain it when declining, and to renew it when interrupted.

You will also, if you be true disciples of CHRIST, *put on bowels of mercies*. By the compassion, which you have experienced yourselves, your hearts will be moulded to compassion for the wants and sorrows of others: you will feel an ardent desire to relieve distress, wheresoever you can find it; and will seize every opportunity of rendering your needy or afflicted brethren both temporal and spiritual service—with sincerity, with promptitude, and with effect.

As Christians, moreover, you will inviolably adhere to truth—not only in solemn testimony,

testimony, involving your neighbour's life or property; or in promises, affecting his convenience: but even in common conversation. St. Paul has warned us against *foolish talking and jesting*, as bringing *the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience*: and One, greater than St. Paul, has declared—*that every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment*. Once more—as Christians, with the consciousness of your own numerous imperfections, you will cultivate candour; carefully avoiding to condemn others in such a manner, as to excite the severity of God's condemnation against yourselves: **FOR ALL YOUR DOINGS ARE NOTHING WORTH WITHOUT CHARITY, THAT MOST EXCELLENT GIFT, THE VERY BOND OF PEACE AND OF ALL VIRTUES; WITHOUT WHICH WHOSOEVER LIVETH IS COUNTED DEAD BEFORE GOD:*** which giveth utility to learning, sanctity to knowledge, activity to faith, and efficacy to benevolence.

With these particular branches of the Christian temper and character some gene-

* Occ. in Coll. Quinquag.

ral qualifications must be incorporated ; viz. sincerity, constancy, and energy.

Sincerity, above all, is the very soul of true religion. The endeavour to please God, and to approve yourselves to Him, must pervade and animate your whole behaviour. Your hearts must be engaged in your devotion : and your private and secret conduct must (in that case it certainly will) be as upright, as that which is public and visible.

This devotion must not be offered by sudden fits and starts ; but habitually, permanently, and with constancy. There must be a resolute, though humble, purpose of adhering to it at all times and upon all occasions. It must mingle with the stated and ordinary business of life : and to the end of life you must persevere in it ; neither seduced by the temptations of the way, nor discouraged by the difficulties of the journey.

Finally—as honest professors of Christianity, you must exert a pious energy in its service. You must be especially studious to correct what is irregular in yourselves ; and to act as becomes the *holy calling, wherewith*
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ye are called. Nor will you look upon the conduct of others, in this respect, with an indifferent eye; but (still in consistency with meekness, and temperance, and charity) testify your disapprobation of whatever is dishonourable to your Creator, or injurious to your fellow-creatures.

Such are the temper and character required by the gospel: and they are truly excellent—but they are not easily to be attained. Temptations on one hand, and difficulties on the other, vicious companions and corrupted hearts, will struggle hard to preserve or to recover their dominion over you. You think now probably that your present views will be lasting, because they refer to lasting principles and objects. Alas! to-morrow perhaps may undeceive you, or rather deceive you anew. To-morrow may present you some alluring trifle in a fresh dress, which will amuse you into forgetfulness: or perhaps to-night, before you lie down on your beds, the vivid impression may have faded away. The dormant passions may spring up again, as if they had slept
only

only to recruit their vigour; and, if they are not resisted by other and better strength than your own—the chains they will impose must be more oppressive, more ignominious, and more fatal.

What then is to be done? Must you lie down in despair? *God forbid.* You have read of *doing all things through CHRIST, which strengtheneth you; whose grace is sufficient for you; and whose strength is made perfect in weakness.* The Scripture indeed abounds with passages, which uniformly enforce the same principle, and graft upon it the same doctrine—stating every where that the introduction of religion into the soul is matter of divine promise, is to be ascribed to divine agency, and is represented as the labour of God; who *begins and performs it, until the day of JESUS CHRIST—working in us both to will and to do, of His good pleasure.*

Adopt it, therefore, as a most certain conclusion, that no attempt after holiness is to be made in your own strength; for *we are not sufficient of ourselves to think any thing, as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God.*

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By His Blessed Spirit alone (which He has promised to bestow abundantly upon such, as apply to Him faithfully in His Son's name) can your hearts be purified, your resolutions invigorated, and your services rendered acceptable. Resolve therefore strenuously in favour of virtue, but resolve at the same time humbly and modestly. When you are almost afraid to declare before the LORD, that you will carefully abstain from this or that sin, and rigidly comply with this or that precept; and dare only venture to express your earnest desire, that you may by Divine Grace be enabled to avoid the one, and to pursue the other—then are you in the best way of subduing temptation, and of discharging duty.

Let not then your consciousness of insufficiency deter you from engaging in a religious life: but consider what firm grounds you have to hope, that *in due season ye shall reap, if ye faint not.* Reason, which teaches us the need we have of spiritual assistance in a virtuous course, teaches us likewise that a benevolent God, *who is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil,* must
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take peculiar pleasure in giving grace to the humble : and Scripture amply confirms the expectation. There we hear Divine Wisdom crying even to triflers—“ *Turn you at my reproof, and I will pour out my Spirit unto you.*” There we hear the apostle exhorting—*Let us come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.* There we hear CHRIST Himself arguing—*If ye, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children; how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him?*

In the oft-repeated warning—*Strive to enter in at the strait gate,* formidable opposition indeed is implied. The flesh, and the world, are powerful enemies ; and require that you should *take unto you the whole armour of God*, in order to *quit you like men*, and like Christians.

You must feel, in the language of the apostle, *the flesh lusting against the Spirit.* With irregular native propensities, strengthened by frequent indulgence, you are scarcely capable of thorough reformation. Can
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the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? Then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil. Pride or indolence, alienation of heart from things spiritual, or immoderate attachment to things temporal (though now little suspected) will perhaps expose you, in your state of greatest security, to painful and dangerous conflicts.

The world will also throw in your way numerous and great obstructions—by its manners, its customs, and its examples. *The things of the world* will thwart you one way, the men of the world another. Little aided by the sympathy of the good, and much resisted by the opposition of the wicked, you will have many an arduous struggle to encounter. Of your sinful associates some will endeavour to retain you by art, and more to recal you by ridicule. You must endure the *trial of cruel mockings*, and the violent persecution of the tongue, if you will not again return to your wild career of guilt and of madness.

Nevertheless, my brethren, be not discouraged. *Fear not: He, that is with you, is greater than they that are against you—*
even

even CHRIST, *the Captain of your salvation.* Fight therefore under His banners against your enemies, as in the presence of GOD; and *resist them, stedfast in the faith.* Remember, that He can give power to the faint, and to them that have no might can increase strength. Amidst all the opposition then, which you may experience, look upward and look forward for aid and for recompence; and, when temptations assail you, think upon Him, whom the Tempter assailed in the wilderness in vain. Hear Him proclaim—*Behold, I come quickly, and my reward is with me: and, Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life; even a crown of glory, that fadeth not away,*

Now to GOD, &c.

SERMON

SERMON VIII.

THE CHRISTIAN'S SELF-DEDICATION,
ATTENDANCE UPON THE LORD'S SUPPER, AND
DAILY WALKING WITH GOD.

ROM. XII :

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of GOD, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto GOD, which is your reasonable service.

NOTWITHSTANDING all the opposition, which arises to the Christian in his progress towards heaven, the powerful motives suggested in my preceding discourses will, I trust, have determined at least some of you, my brethren, to devote yourselves to the service of GOD—deliberately, willingly, cordially, cheerfully. Can any thing indeed be more reasonable than that

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we should thus yield ourselves to the LORD who created us, who brought us into this pleasant and beautiful world, sustained us in the helplessness of infancy, guarded us amidst the dangers of youth, and has since continually protected and preserved us?—that we should receive him, as our sovereign Ruler; and reverence him, as our supreme Benefactor? Can any thing be more equitable than that, produced by His word, and ransomed by His Son's blood, we should be His for ever?

This surrender must also be entire. All you are, and all you have, and all you can do—your time, your possessions, your influence must be devoted to his service. Every thing must be resigned to the disposal of His providence; and not only His power, but His right, to do what He pleases with you and yours must be freely and fully acknowledged.

It must likewise be perpetual: so made, as never to be resumed. For the claims of God are, like himself, eternal and immutable; and, with regard to His rational creatures, *the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever.*

To this end, among others (of confirming our self-dedication to GOD) was appointed the sacrament of the LORD's Supper: by which however the communicants further pledge themselves to an affectionate remembrance of His dying love, and a sincere charity towards their fellow-creatures. As a seal therefore of the covenant ratified by His death, it must be received with humble thankfulness; its blessings fervently solicited, and its demands by the aid of Divine Grace strenuously fulfilled. And as, *though many, we are all partakers of that one bread,* and are all *made to drink into one Spirit*, this consideration should unite us all by the bond of true brotherly regard. Let me then most earnestly recommend to you the observation of our Saviour's precept upon this subject: let me urge you most zealously to approach His Table, at every convenient opportunity; not more with a view to the objects for which it was instituted, than to the benefits with which it will be attended. The difficulties, which you must expect to encounter in your Christian career, nothing but the love of CHRIST can enable you to

overcome ; and nothing can inspire you with a sense of His love so fully, as the commemoration of that death which it induced Him to undergo. What indeed can so awfully convince us that *we are not our own, being bought with a price* ; what so effectually guard us against the recurrence of those sins, which we have solemnly renounced ; what so firmly engage our fidelity to His service, what so entirely melt our souls with tenderness, what so fervently inflame our feelings with gratitude—as the contemplation of those agonies, by which our redemption and salvation were purchased ?

Again, what can more closely *knit together our hearts in love* ; what join us in spirit more indissolubly—than to behold ourselves, as *one in CHRIST JESUS* ; and to anticipate by hope the blessed day when, *with all that in every place call upon His name, we shall ever be with the LORD* ?

Let me intreat you therefore in His name, let me charge it upon your consciences by His authority, that *if you love Him*, you keep this as well as the rest of His commandments. If, as far as you know your own
 hearts,

hearts, you have deliberately, cheerfully, entirely, and perpetually surrendered yourselves to GOD; if you desire to remember the death of His Son; if you would at present become His disciples, and finally be *with Him where He is*; if you would not indulge yourselves wilfully in the practice of any one known sin, or in the omission of any one known duty—I think I may venture to pronounce, not only that you are welcome to the Holy Table, but that for such as you it is prepared.

Do not decline to attend, from an apprehension of the weakness of the religious principle in your souls: if that principle be really implanted there, attendance will strengthen and cherish it. Do not hesitate, from the fear of aggravating your guilt in case of apostasy: by this rite, through God's grace, apostasy may be prevented. Open your eyes, I beseech you, in time. Let me address you, as the angels did *Lot*, when they brought him forth from *Sodom*: ESCAPE FOR THY LIFE, LOOK NOT BEHIND THEE, NEITHER STAY THOU IN ALL THE

PLAIN; ESCAPE TO THE Saviour, LEST THOU BE CONSUMED *. At all events, take the matter into your most serious consideration; and, if upon conscientious inquiry you find yourselves still in want of encouragement, continue your reflections and your prayers, till farther encouragement be bestowed. For be assured that, while you are unfit to approach this ordinance, you are unfit for death and heaven; and therefore, as you would not lie down to sleep on the edge of a precipice, you should not, so much as for a single day, suspend your religious labours.

In addition however to this solemn and necessary duty, many others demand our attention, relating to that truly-devout character, which (in the language of Scripture) may be called a daily walking with God, and *being in the fear of the LORD all the day long*.

These naturally divide themselves into three heads—referring respectively to the beginning, the progress, and the conclusion of the day.

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* Gen. xix. 17. occ. in 1 Lesson 1 Lent.

In the beginning of the day—it should certainly be our first care, as soon as we awake, to lift up our hearts unto the LORD. In this duty indeed a serious mind, one would suppose, could never be deficient. The ease and activity, with which we are inspired; the refreshment, which we have derived from sleep; the security, in which we have rested; the cheerful light of the returning sun; the prospect of spending another day in the service of God, in the society of our friends, and in our own improvement; and, above all, the lively hope of another and a superior resurrection to happiness and glory—all these blessings must necessarily suggest abundant matter of thanksgiving. To praise God for his mercies—looking to CHRIST, as to the great foundation-stone of all our enjoyments and expectations; and acknowledging with humble gratitude the influences of the Holy Spirit, which have led or are leading us to the performance of our duty—cannot surely be deemed either tedious or superfluous.

It would likewise be highly useful, to weigh beforehand the business and engage-

ments of the day: what opportunities of good, or what temptations to evil, it may bring along with it; and how the former may best be improved, or the latter most successfully avoided—accompanying this anticipation with a short prayer, that God would graciously quicken us in the one case, and strengthen us in the other: that He would *establish the work of our hands upon us*, when undertaken with a due regard to His presence; and sanctify to our improvement the adversities, with which He may exercise our resignation.

In the progress of the day—it is necessary that we be uniformly serious in our Christian devotions, diligently prosecute our allotted labours, enjoy our amusements temperately, attend to the dispensations of Providence carefully, guard cautiously against temptations, depend humbly upon the Almighty, govern our thoughts strictly in solitude, and preserve our conversation uncorrupted in society. I shall consider each of these in their order.

With respect to our Christian devotions—it would become us, before we begin them, to pause—and reflect upon the perfections of

Him whom we address; the pleasure, as well as advantage, *of worshipping Him in spirit and in truth*; and the guilt, as well as folly, of *drawing near Him with our mouth, and with our lips honouring Him, while our hearts are far removed from Him.* When we have

begun them—we ought anxiously to watch, and instantly to check, the first wanderings of thought, which would otherwise pollute or render them inefficient.

After they are concluded—we should review the imperfect manner in which they have been performed, feel ourselves deeply humbled by the retrospect, and tremble lest our very *prayer become sin.*

As for our allotted labours—we should engage in them under a full sense of the authority, and with a deep regard to the glory of God: not indulging indolence or sluggishness, but on the contrary exciting ourselves to industry, by the reflection that *the night cometh, when no man can work*; and that *there is neither labour, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the grave, whither we are all going.*

Our amusements should be not only well-chosen,

chosen, but used likewise in subordination to the divine honour: lest they estrange our hearts from religion, absorb too large a portion of our time, and occasion us to abuse the high faculties of our nature, to neglect the great advantages of the Christian revelation, or to disregard the noble purposes for which we were created.

The finger of God may be traced both in our comforts and in our afflictions: in our comforts—when we find ourselves in continued health, furnished with food for support and pleasure, surrounded by friends, prosperous in business, going out and coming in safely, and enjoying that cheerfulness, which is the basis of all other enjoyment: in our afflictions—when we suffer disappointment, loss, pain or unkindness; to all which we should submit patiently, from the consideration that they are directly or indirectly the divine work; and, if not ordained, are certainly permitted by the Almighty.

With regard to temptations—on changing our place or employment, we should anticipate the new snares to which we may be exposed;

exposed ; remember, that *with the temptation is also made a way to escape, that we may be able to bear it* ; and keep ever in mind, that the eye of the All-seeing is over us—observing what fortitude we possess, and how far His authority and promises sustain us in the hour of trial.

As for depending in all circumstances upon Providence, a few instances will best explain my meaning. The true Christian, when about to pray, will solicit God to fix his attention, to awaken his holy affections, and *pour out upon him the spirit of grace and of supplication* : when opening his Bible, or any other religious work—will request Him to enlighten his understanding, to confirm his good resolutions, and to *open his eyes, that he may behold wondrous things out of His law* : when undertaking worldly business, will entreat Him to bestow a blessing upon his honest endeavours : when engaging in recreation, to give success to his innocent pursuits : when coming into company, to grant that *no corrupt communication may proceed out of his mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister*
grace

grace unto the hearers: when involved in difficulties, to give him that wisdom which is profitable to direct, and to lead him in a plain path: when encountering temptation, to make perfect the divine strength in his weakness, &c.

To govern our thoughts in solitude, we must have accustomed ourselves to govern them at all other times—avoiding those entanglements of passion, that attachment to present views and interests, which would deprive us of our power over them: and in their stead proposing for our contemplation the perfections of GOD, the love of CHRIST, the value of time, the certainty of death and judgment, and the eternity of happiness or misery which is to ensue; or (on a lower scale) reflecting upon the last portion of scripture which we have read, the last sermon which we have heard, &c. with the impressions, which at the time they respectively produced.

Lastly, to preserve our conversation uncorrupted in society—we should take particular care that nothing escape us, exposing ourselves or our religion to reproach; nothing

thing injurious to the absent, or unkind to the present; nothing malignant, or insincere; nothing which has a tendency to seduce, provoke, or mislead those about us. Nor is it enough, that our discourse be merely innocent; we should endeavour, further, to make it edifying—always provided with some useful subject, and always watching some suitable opportunity of introducing it; always in private entreating God to assist us with His grace in our attempts to do good, and that we may neither act nor speak nor think any thing unworthy of our Christian profession and character.

With respect to the conclusion of the day—we should take care, that its secret duties be well performed; and that we lie down to repose, in a state of general charity and peace.

We ought never to close our evening, without fervently praying that God would pardon our manifold offences; without praising Him for His mercies, temporal and spiritual; and without recommending ourselves, our *friends and neighbours*, to His Almighty protection.

In addition to
this,

this, I would most zealously recommend to you scrupulous self-examination; which may be comprised in the following or similar queries, respectively relative to the preceding subdivisions of daily duty, to be proposed by each of you to his own conscience, viz. “ Did I awake this morning, with a grateful sense of the divine goodness? Did I acknowledge it in my prayers and praises?

How have I discharged the other duties of the day?—with diligence?—with spirituality? Have I done every thing in season, and with all convenient dispatch, and *as to the LORD*? What time have I lost, and upon what occasions? With what temper, and under what regulations, have I indulged my amusements? Have I observed the hand of GOD in my comforts—such as health, cheerfulness, food, clothing, safety in journies, success in business, conversation and kindness of friends, &c.: and likewise in my afflictions; particularly in little things, tending to vex and disquiet me? And have I received those comforts thankfully, and those afflictions submissively? How have I guarded against
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the temptations of the day? Have I maintained an humble dependence upon my Maker and Preserver? Have I lived *by the faith of His Son*; regarding Him as my teacher, my atonement, my intercessor, my example, and my friend? Have I looked forward to death, and to eternity; and considered myself as actually a probationer and, through divine grace, an expectant of heaven? Have I endeavoured to govern my thoughts well, especially in such and such an interval of solitude? Have I preserved my conversation uncorrupted in society? Have I said nothing imprudent, or mischievous, or slanderous, or passionate?—Has my heart, in short, been full of love towards God, and of good-will towards man? And have I anxiously sought, and industriously improved, opportunities of doing and of getting good”?

These questions (I observed above) are so arranged, as to include the whole of the preceding directions; and conscience will not be long in answering them all.

There remain then to be considered only—the sentiments of general charity and
peace,

peace, with which we should lie down to repose. Under this head we cannot but reflect upon the goodness of GOD, in having added another day, with its mercies, to the former days and mercies of our lives ; and in giving us health of body and serenity of mind, from which we may reasonably expect the refreshment of sleep. Moreover, as we are about to resign ourselves to this “ image of death,” we should meditate upon death itself, that end of all living ; and resolve so to dispose our thoughts, as if we were assured that we should never more awake on earth—inquiring of our souls (and demanding of them an answer, as in the divine presence) whether there be no unforsaken sin, to fill them with anguish in their departing moments, and to make them tremble upon the verge of eternity.

One day, my brethren, thus spent is preferable to whole years of irreligion and sensuality ; and it is better to be *a door-keeper in the house of your GOD, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness.*

Now to GOD, &c.

SERMON

SERMON IX.

DAILY PIETY ENFORCED,
AND
VARIOUS TEMPTATIONS POINTED OUT.

1st THESS. IV. 1.

We beseech you, brethren, and exhort you by the Lord JESUS, that as ye have received of us how ye ought to walk and to please GOD, so ye would abound more and more.

IN the discourse before the last, I exhibited to you a comprehensive view of the several branches of the Christian character; as it implied (generally) a new and divine temper—resembling that of CHRIST, and engaging us to be *spiritually-minded, and to walk by faith*: and (more particularly) as it included, with respect to God—fear, and
K affection;

affection, and obedience; faith, and love, and joy towards JESUS CHRIST; and a due reverence for the Holy Spirit: as it prescribed, with regard to ourselves—preference of the soul to the body, humility, purity, temperance, contentment, and patience; and as it enforced, in our intercourse with our fellow-creatures—love, meekness, peaceableness, mercy, truth, and charity:—all to be accompanied with sincerity, constancy, and energy.

Fearing that you might despair of attaining such various perfection, I then advised you to seek the aid of Divine Grace; of which the reality and necessity are so fully evinced by Scripture, and which is so frequently promised to the humble petitioner: and, finally, after stating the opposition which you must expect to encounter from the flesh and the world, I encouraged you to persevere—by a sense of the constant presence of GOD, of the promised mediation of His Son, and of the splendid rewards reserved for the faithful.

In my last discourse, therefore, I exhorted you to surrender yourselves to your Creator
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—deliberately, cheerfully, entirely, and perpetually : and to seal the solemn engagement at the LORD's Table, the privilege of which is justly to be deemed inestimable, whether we consider its ends or its Author. I further noticed (and, I trust, removed) the objections, alledged by many, of unfitness, weakness of grace, &c.; and urged you, at all events, to take the matter into your most serious consideration. Lastly, I laid before you an outline of a truly-Christian day ; enumerating the respective duties of its beginning, its progress, and its conclusion : viz. lifting up our hearts unto the LORD, when we awake :—being serious in our devotions, diligent in our labours, temperate in our amusements, observant of divine providences, watchful against temptation, humbly dependent upon the Almighty, and preserving our thoughts uncorrupted both in solitude and in society :—and closing the evening with private prayer, scrupulous self-examination, perfect charity towards our fellow-creatures, and serious meditation upon the last sleep—that of death.

These directions may seem perhaps to many rigorous, and to some needlessly so. Yet, when we call to mind that we are required to *love the LORD our GOD with all our heart, and with all our soul, and with all our mind, and with all our strength*, we cannot but think them generally necessary. And they would be more easily practicable too, if we would consent to abandon our vicious indulgencies; if we would learn properly to value our time, and anxiously to *redeem it*. But we fix our views too low; and rate the sublime principles of our *holy calling*, beneath what both the nature of religion and the divine word suggest. Besides, our indolence (original and acquired) and our proverbial inconstancy deprive us of that influence and authority over our minds, which are requisite for the proper execution of a plan in itself so desirable.

Let me entreat you however, my brethren, by whatever regard you entertain for the honour of GOD and your own real welfare, duly to consider the reasonableness of this plan; and to judge for yourselves—whether it will not highly conduce to your present

sent comfort and usefulness, inspire you with resignation in adversity, give you peace in death, and through CHRIST secure your eternal felicity.

As to its reasonableness—recollect, that you were created by the Almighty, and have been redeemed by his Son's blood; and then say, if it be not reasonable that you should devote yourselves to his service. Suppose all my counsels reduced to practice: suppose the day begun and concluded by prayer to GOD, and *communion with your own hearts*: suppose a regard to your Maker, a sense of His presence and a zeal for His glory, to pervade all your acts of worship, all your toils of business, all your pursuits of recreation: suppose your observation of the divine hand, your watchfulness against temptations, your acquiescence in the allotments of Providence, your government of your thoughts, alone and in company, to have been perfect and complete:—suppose, I say, all this accomplished, not for a single day or week only, but for the remainder of your lives; and imagine yourselves, at their close, looking back upon them in

the full exercise of your rational faculties; could you then say, "I have taken too much pains about religion; less diligence, less zeal, less fidelity might have been an equivalent for the blessings of creation and redemption: a part of my heart and of my leisure might have sufficed for Him, who made that heart beat, and bestowed upon me that leisure; for Him, who hath *redeemed my life from destruction, and crowned me with loving-kindness and tender mercies*"?

If you could not, you must acknowledge—that these services are reasonable in themselves; are required both by duty, and by gratitude; and cannot be neglected without offending God, and disgracing and ultimately destroying yourselves.

Nay, would not such a system of conduct most effectually promote your present comfort? Reflect seriously, wherein real and substantial comfort consists. Does it consist in distance from God, or in nearness to him? You can neither be Christians nor rational creatures, if you do not know that it is intercourse with the *Father of spirits*, which constitutes the happiness of futurity.

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If you have made any trial of religion, even for a few months or weeks, you can be at no loss to pronounce which part of your life has been most pleasant to you. The restraint in many instances imposed upon your carnal inclinations, however disagreeable to the existing appetite, must have been more than counter-balanced by the satisfaction arising from a consciousness of self-government, and the felt discharge of duty—though interrupted, and irregular, and defective.

Examine likewise the useful influence, which you may hereby possess, upon the conduct of others. With hearts so disposed, you would make it your chief study to watch and to seize every opportunity of doing good: and, *your light so shining before men*, some at least of them must see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven. For the charm of such models would surely inspire imitation: and thus, through the divine blessing, you might enjoy the praise and the reward—not only of the good which you had actually done yourselves, but likewise (in a certain degree) of that, to which you had excited others.

Nor can any human eye discern, into what distant times or places the happy consequences of your example might extend.

Upon bosoms gladdened by such considerations, and rejoicing in the testimony of conscience, afflictions press with diminished force. Reviewing past scenes, you will find consolation in recollecting that you have humbled yourselves for past offences; and evinced the sincerity of your humiliation by its only sure test, amendment: and, while converse with God and benevolence towards man form your great pleasure, you will discover abundant sources of enjoyment—when the gratifications of sense are neither desired, nor attainable.

At length, death will come; that awful hour, through which thousands have passed who had adopted this plan, and millions alas! who had rejected it. At that hour, did any of those thousands—think you, my brethren—repent of their adoption; or any of those millions rejoice in their rejection of it? Did the former wish to recal any part of the time, which they had thus religiously employed, that they might be
more

more *conformed to this world*; and pursue its honours, its pleasures, or its possessions with greater eagerness? Or did the latter form the same wish—do you suppose—in order to squander the invaluable opportunity, as before, upon idle or criminal indulgencies? If that King of Terrors should surprise you suddenly, would you not that he should find you engaged in the fulfilment of duty? Would not such a consciousness render your passage to heaven more easy and more delightful? On the other hand, should he approach you by gradual advances, would not the retrospect of a holy and exemplary life contribute to tranquillize your last moments? Not that you should die, depending upon these things—*GOD forbid!* Sensible of your numerous imperfections, and THAT YOU HAVE NO POWER OF YOURSELVES TO HELP YOURSELVES,* you would feel it necessary to appear before the Almighty in the *wedding garment* of His Son's righteousness; and ascribe to the riches of His

* Occ. in Coll. 2 Lent.

grace every pious disposition, every good action, by which you might have been characterized. Yet still it would afford you no common satisfaction to consider, that this *grace bestowed upon you had not been in vain*: but that with humble gratitude you had glorified your Maker, and in some measure had *finished the work, which He had given you to do.*

The care also or negligence, which you may have exhibited in time, will affect your reception in eternity. It cannot be a matter of indifference to CHRIST, whether you have been industrious or indolent in his service. You must surely wish to have an *entrance ministered unto you abundantly into His everlasting kingdom*: and what can more certainly conduce to it, than *always to abound in His work*? You will not, at that time, look around you with secret disappointment—as if you had valued too highly, or pursued too earnestly, your glorious inheritance: on the contrary, you will probably be sorry (if in such a place you can feel sorrow) that, amidst so many motives
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and advantages, you did not exert yourselves still more actively, in opposition to every obstacle, for its attainment.

For, beside the difficulties mentioned in a former discourse, under the general heads of the flesh and the world, which by resolution and perseverance properly directed may be overcome; others, in their onset as fierce and in their struggles more obstinate, will rise up against you. Such are indolence, the excessive love of animal pleasure, vain company, and the tumults of worldly business: which often prove ensnaring to many, particularly to the inconsiderate and the young.

Those classes therefore, in particular, I must entreat to guard—against indolence. The love of ease is an insinuating seducer; and often succeeds, where less artful assailants fail. The mis-spending of a little time, however small the offence may appear, frequently breaks in upon hours consecrated to devotion, or allotted to necessary labours; besides generating habits of irregularity, and exposing the trisler, in that state of remissness,

ness, to more dangerous temptations. Be suspicious therefore of its first approaches, and *gird up the loins of your mind*. Keep yourselves always well employed; and say not, with the sluggard—*yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep*. Consider what duties are to be performed, and in what seasons: form your plans prudently, and pursue them strenuously; and, should any thing arise to interrupt them to-day, despatch them (if possible) to-morrow.

Resist also an excessive love of animal pleasure. GOD HATH NOT CALLED US UNTO UNCLEANNESSE, BUT UNTO HOLINESS*. CHRIST has told us, that, if any man will come after Him, he *must deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Him*. And, in conformity to His own precept, *He pleased not Himself*; but submitted to want and distress, for His Father's glory and our eternal welfare. A life of intemperance only gives force to seductions, which might easily be subdued by one habituated to *endure hardness, as a good soldier of JESUS CHRIST*. It also produces

* 1 *Thess.* iv. 7. occ. in Epist. 2 Lent.

an attachment to *the world, and the things that are in the world*; ill becoming those who are *strangers and pilgrims on the earth*, and expect soon to be summoned to that *better country*, which they profess to seek.

It further often entails an expence upon the individual, which obliges him to injure his creditors by payments suspended or with-held, to deprive his family of their legitimate comforts, and ultimately to become a wretched dependent on the bounty of his friends, the alms of his neighbours, or the relief of his parish.

Such a poverty, unlike that which can neither be foreseen nor avoided, is not less guilty than despicable; and, even where it stops short of actual violence, generally incites to low artifice and mean collusions—unworthy of genuine Christianity, irreconcilable with moral honesty.

Watch then against these temptations; and repel them, as they arise, by diligence in business, by frugality in expenditure: thus may your affairs be prosperous, your health vigorous, and your minds happy. But, in order to this, you must be firm in your virtuous resolutions;

solutions; and inflexibly refuse to comply with the proposals of the profligate, even where they refer to things in their own nature apparently indifferent. Remember and weigh well that excellent remark, sealed by the ruin of so many thousands—*He, that contemneth small things, shall fall by little and little.*

Avoid likewise vain company: not only the openly-licentious, of whom I have already warned you; but those who, without avowedly opposing religion or practising immorality, have no proper sense of divine things upon their hearts. With such you must undoubtedly often hold intercourse in society; and Christianity not only allows, but requires, that you should treat them with kindness and respect. Yet such should not be your intimate friends, the chosen partners of your leisure. *Be you companions of all them that fear God, and of them that keep His precepts.* These, in the sight of the Almighty, are the excellent of the earth; in these therefore be *all your delight.*

The friendship of such will secure you from the snares of indolence, of pleasure,
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and of bad example ; as well as from those tumults of worldly business, which absorbing all your time and thoughts would *choke the word, and render it unfruitful*. Plunge not then into a greater variety or extent of occupation, than you can manage in consistency with the divine service. This indeed prudential considerations alone would suggest ; as multitudes have been undone by their ambition, who might have advanced, under the blessing of Providence, by sure though slow degrees, to honourable increase. But if there were no danger upon this head, if you were as certain of attaining affluence and distinction, as you are of perplexing and fatiguing yourselves in the pursuit, recollect how precarious such things are. If, in resolving to be rich, you do not *pierce yourselves through with many sorrows* ; remember, that *riches certainly make themselves wings and fly away, as an eagle toward heaven* : or, if they remain, often become a trap, which should have been for a man's welfare. Forget not that short lesson, comprehensive of the highest wisdom—*one thing is needful*. Reflect daily, while
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the gaieties of life are glittering before your eyes, that death is constantly though silently on his march, to strip the possessor of them. Keep eternity perpetually in your view ; and be fully persuaded, that you have neither business nor interest inconsistent with it, for whatever is inconsistent with it is not your business or your interest.

Lastly—learn, by Divine Grace, to die to the present world : a world, never intended for your final and complete felicity ; a world, where something indeed is to be enjoyed, but much more to be endured ; where important duties are constantly to be discharged, and severe discipline almost constantly to be undergone—till you are summoned to that happier state, where every sublunary scene shall disappear ; and in their stead the strengthened sight shall be filled with glories, of which the imagination, with its present powers, is unable to form the slightest conception.

Now to God, &c.

SERMON

SERMON X.

THE CASE OF SPIRITUAL LANGUOR;
OFTEN SUCCEEDED BY A
RELAPSE INTO KNOWN AND DELIBERATE SIN.

GAL. IV. 15.

Where is then the blessedness ye spake of?

IF the exhortations and cautions, contained in the nine foregoing discourses, have fortunately been efficacious—you will proceed in the ways of religion, my brethren, with increasing pleasure; and your path will be like *the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day*.

But, from the experience of all ages, it is to be feared—that on the hearts of many of you, the salutary impression, however deep, will at some period or other (perhaps quickly) be effaced.

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Gradually

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Gradually and almost unconsciously relaxing in your piety, you may at last neglect it altogether; and in this state of spiritual languor fall a prey to temptations, which you now survey only with contempt. The Almighty may, in consequence, *hide His face* from you; or stretch forth His hand, and give you affliction in the stead of that happiness, with which you are now *rejoicing in the LORD, and joying in the GOD of your salvation.*

By spiritual languor I do not mean every abatement of that fervour, which is felt by youth, in the first moments of its conversion. Our nature, in all its stages peculiarly struck by novelty, is further subject in early life to the strong impulses of juvenile passion. This however is seldom sufficiently attended to: and hence we sometimes observe the advanced Christian lamenting imaginary rather than real decays, and crying, without any just foundation, "*Oh! that I were, as in months past!*" I can scarcely therefore repeat too often—that religion consists in a constant endeavour to avoid,

avoid, whatever we are conscientiously persuaded the Deity disapproves; to execute, whatever He enjoins; and to consult His glory, by promoting the happiness of His creatures. These are its great objects; and, in fulfilling them, we are to consider the simplicity and purity of our motives—for these, with all our desires and designs, are open to the Searcher of hearts—humbling ourselves at the same time before Him, under a deep sense of our imperfections; and depending wholly upon the merits of JESUS CHRIST, and the grace of the gospel, for our acceptance.

With this necessary precaution, I proceed to remark that spiritual languor implies a forgetfulness of divine objects, and a remissness in the discharge of religious duties. Some of its symptoms may vary, with the varying circumstances and relations of the individual; but others are of a more universal kind: and these it will be proper to exhibit more in detail.

The first, probably, will be a neglect of the duties of the closet: not perhaps an im-

mediate or total neglect, but a cold and heartless performance of them. Natural indolence, the conversation of friends, worldly business, or frivolous amusement will gradually intrude upon the seasons allotted to devotion, till at last they are entirely absorbed. You may console yourselves by imagining, while you are hurrying over your abbreviated and scanty prayers, that it is but for once. Alas! you will indulge the growing infirmity another and another time, and in each instance more readily than in the preceding. And thus will *GOD be mocked*, His word slighted, self-examination refused, and secret supplication treated as a trifling ceremony—rather than as a pious homage, fit for the Majesty of Heaven.

If you do not resolutely oppose these declensions in their infancy, they will speedily affect your acts of social worship: you will soon feel their fatal operation in your domestic and public devotions. Even at the *LORD'S Table*, if you still continue there a constrained and formal attendance, after a preparation necessarily inadequate, you will attend

attend with decreasing advantage—till, dissatisfied as you must be with the review, you desert it altogether. You will then fall with accelerated speed; and your struggles, if you make any, against your fate will grow daily feebler and more ineffectual. THE EVIL SPIRIT, expelled upon your former change of heart, WILL TAKE TO HIM SEVEN OTHER SPIRITS MORE WICKED THAN HIMSELF; AND ENTER IN, AND DWELL WITH YOU: AND YOUR LAST STATE WILL BE WORSE THAN YOUR FIRST*.

With your love towards God and His Son, your affection towards your fellow-creatures, and your desire of rendering them service, will proportionally decline. You will neglect religious discourse, even when suitable opportunities occur, with your family and friends. Attachments to pleasure or business will supervene, and with them their peculiar temptations: in some cases, perhaps, to the detriment of your morals; and, in all, to the injury of your innocence and peace.

* *Luke xi. 26. occ. in Gosp. 3 Lent.*

Finally, you may possibly adopt prejudices against those very principles, by which alone your restoration can be effected; and conclude that your previous piety was ridiculous enthusiasm, your past strictness of life unnecessary austerity. You may be taught to think that, if you avoid gross immorality, and treat others upon the whole with humanity—reviling those merely, who would disturb society by what is termed the narrowness of their notions; for they are generally exempted from the boasted comprehension of this Universal Benevolence—you are in the way of salvation. LET NO MAN DECEIVE YOU WITH VAIN WORDS; FOR, BECAUSE OF THESE THINGS, COMETH THE WRATH OF GOD UPON THE CHILDREN OF DISOBEDIENCE; BE NOT YE THEREFORE PARTAKERS WITH THEM*. This is indeed a dreadful symptom; as it intercepts the application of the only remedy, which can effectually resist its virulence. It is like the lethargy, preceding apoplexy and death.

* *Eph.* v. 6, 7. occ. in *Epist.* 3 Lent

I do not here design to enlarge upon those dangerous delusions, when acting with their full and uncontrolled ascendancy: but if Divine Grace awaken you to read your Bible, and give you to *understand what you read*, conviction will flash upon your minds, and dispel the gloom thickening around you. My purpose is, to engage you to guard against them upon their first appearance, and to advise you to inquire frequently of yourselves in private—How affairs stand between God and your souls; whether they are as you could wish them to be, if you were tottering upon the verge of eternity? Ah! my brethren, one serious thought of eternity will shame a thousand vain excuses, with which we are always so much inclined to impose upon ourselves. Under these secret misgivings then do not, I beseech you, seek to palliate the matter; or endeavour vainly to disguise, what your consciences must certainly condemn: but honestly and humbly own your conviction. Pour out your hearts before the Almighty, and solicit the renewed influences of His Holy Spirit. Resume

with increased strictness your habits of private prayer, and rigorous self-examination. Read the Scripture, especially its more spiritual parts, with augmented diligence. Labour to feel in the perusal, what you have reason to believe its writers felt in the composition of it; and receive with all simplicity its inspired instructions. Above all, seek and cultivate the society of those, whose progress in religion is attested by the superior piety of their lives. Copy their temper, and sentiments, and conduct. Employ your leisure in studying practical works of devotion, in which you can taste the genuine fruits of Christianity. To conclude—seize the first opportunity of attending the LORD's Table, and spare neither time nor pains in preparing for it. There repeat your covenant with GOD; surrender your souls into the hands of His Son; and resolve, more strenuously than ever, *to live unto Him, who died for you.* Watch moreover your hearts, that these good impressions may be permanent; and rest not till you have recovered, or advanced beyond the ground you had lost.

I have only to add, that you cannot take these precautions too speedily. The down-hill path of perdition is slippery; and you may find yourselves, ere you are aware, on the brink of that precipice, where your ruin must be equally inevitable and irretrievable. Pray therefore to GOD, that He would immediately *turn your feet unto His testimonies*, and cause you to *make haste to keep his commandments*:—that He would rouse you from the fatal indifference, into which you are gradually sinking; and quicken you again, with more abundant degrees of spiritual life and activity.

Think, oh! think, if you persevere in wilful apostasy, how you must at some time and in some place be agonized!—your comforts destroyed, your evidences darkened, your hopes expiring, your enjoyments tasteless!—the dart of affliction, if you fall (perhaps, by GOD's mercy, fall) into affliction, envenomed by a consciousness of guilt; and the enemy of your souls exulting in the near view of their destruction,
and

and endeavouring to persuade you that their recovery is impossible. But oh! hear him not: yield not, listen not, to his insidious suggestions. Wretched indeed, most deplorably wretched, is your condition; but it is not yet hopeless. *Your wounds are corrupt, because of your foolishness: but there is balm in Gilead, and a physician.* Return, thou backsliding Israel, saith the LORD; and I will not cause mine anger to fall upon you: for I am merciful, saith the LORD, and I will not keep anger for ever. Cry then for renewed grace. Do it immediately. Proceed not another step in that path of danger, which you are now treading. The next will be more hazardous than the last; and may involve you in perils, of which imagination dares scarcely anticipate the issue. *Escape therefore for your lives:* lie not down this night to repose, with the sense of unpardoned transgression—lest the sword of divine Justice smite you, ere the morning.

Do it likewise solemnly. Suspending lighter engagements, if necessary, withdraw

draw into your closet for serious reflection. Hearken with patience to the remonstrances of conscience, however severe: nay, pray that force and efficacy may be added to her reproaches; in order that you may *know and see what an evil and bitter thing it is, to have forsaken the LORD your God.* Consider the aggravations of your offence, in having **DONE THIS GREAT WICKEDNESS, AND SINNED AGAINST HIM.*** Think how justly He might cast you for ever from His presence!—how righteously He might inflict His heaviest vengeance upon you! Indulge these humiliating meditations: the more they grieve you, the greater will be your chance of profiting by them. Then turn your eyes to your Saviour: *look upon Him, whom you have pierced; and mourn.* The God, whose favours you have slighted, whose statutes you have violated, whose promises you have spurned, whose threatenings you have defied—is nevertheless *a merciful God.* Even now He solicits you to be reconciled. But remember

* Gen. xxxix. 9. occ. in I. Lesson 3 Lent.

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the method of reconciliation, which He has appointed. You must come to Him at present, as you at first came, in the name and through the intercession of the Redeemer. Upon that all-powerful support you must rest your hopes of pardon and acceptance: through Him you must renew your application for Divine Grace: by His blood alone can your souls be purified afresh, and your recently-contracted guilt a second time removed. He will delight to raise you up, when prostrate at His feet; to enable you to sanction again that broken covenant, which His Father might have avenged by *terrible things in righteousness*; and to inspire you with a fuller conviction of your natural weakness, and a more entire dependence upon the Holy Spirit for your future security.

Further, if your fall has given scandal to others, confess your guilt before them with all frankness and humility, and entreat their forgiveness. Thus alone will *your feet be guided into the way of peace*—not by palliatives, or excuses, or recriminations:
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these can proceed only from the very madness of pride and self-love. Resent not therefore the rigour of faithful admonition, though it may be excessive: to be censured and condemned by men will appear but a *very small thing* to one, thoroughly humbled under a sense of having offended his Maker. Neither shrink from its severity: recollect that your principal concern is with Him, to whose piercing eye every object is most entirely exposed; *yea, the darkness hideth not from Him, but the night shineth as the day.* Prostrate yourselves then at His footstool; and seek anxiously, through the merits of the great Mediator, a renewal of His favour. Bear likewise in memory your apostasy, even after it is forgiven, for the sake of future caution: weep over it, in your hours of retirement; and view with humiliation, as well as gratitude, the scar—when the wound is healed. For God establishes His covenant, not to obliterate the sense of past abomination, but *that thou mayest remember, and be confounded, and never open thy mouth any more because of thy*

thy shame; even when I am pacified toward thee for all that thou hast done, saith the LORD GOD.

Reflecting upon His spotless purity, and strict impartiality—that omniscience, which *knoweth your foolishness, and from which your sins are not hid*; that omnipotence, which can carry every counsel into immediate and full execution—you must be conscious, that to Him only could you have applied, in your *day of trouble and distress*; that upon Him depended your life, or your death; and that He alone could have restored to your souls the comforts which they had lost, and which they had deserved for ever to lose.

Aggravated as your offence was—by a consideration of the despised authority of GOD, of the rejected intercession of CHRIST, and of the slighted influences of the Holy Spirit; by a view of the dishonour brought upon religion, and of the enemies and the calumnies excited against it—you must feel that the patience and long-suffering of the Deity were marvellous, and still more marvellous His reconciliation:—

still

still more marvellous, when your sins had reached unto heaven, and were lifted up even to the skies, that He should have extended to them His pardon; and, after you had lain mourning at His feet, should have given unto you beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, and the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness.

These are blessings not to be forgotten, or but lightly and occasionally remembered. They ought to excite thankfulness towards God; vigorous efforts for the welfare, temporal and spiritual, of your fellow-creatures; and increased attention and vigilance, on your own parts, that you fall not again into the same or a worse condemnation.

Now to God, &c.

Let me mention, when you find
 that the mind is not at rest,
 and that the body is not at ease,
 and that the soul is not at peace,
 and that the heart is not at home,
 and that the spirit is not at liberty,
 and that the intellect is not at work,
 and that the will is not at command,
 and that the emotions are not at their post,
 and that the senses are not at their duty,
 and that the faculties are not at their service,
 and that the powers are not at their disposal,
 and that the faculties are not at their service,
 and that the powers are not at their disposal,

Let me mention, when you find
 that the mind is not at rest,
 and that the body is not at ease,
 and that the soul is not at peace,
 and that the heart is not at home,
 and that the spirit is not at liberty,
 and that the intellect is not at work,
 and that the will is not at command,
 and that the emotions are not at their post,
 and that the senses are not at their duty,
 and that the faculties are not at their service,
 and that the powers are not at their disposal,
 and that the faculties are not at their service,
 and that the powers are not at their disposal,

Let me mention, when you find

SERMON XI.

DISTRESS FROM THE HIDING OF GOD'S FACE,
OR FROM HEAVY AFFLICTIONS;
AND CHRISTIAN IMPROVEMENT ESTIMATED.

ISAI. LXIV. 7.

Thou hast hid thy face from us, and hast consumed us, because of our iniquities.

YOU recollect, I trust, my brethren, not only the outline, which I laid before you some time ago, of a truly-Christian day; but the motives and arguments, by which it was enforced—its reasonableness; its tendency to promote your present comfort, and usefulness; and its power to inspire you with fortitude in adversity, to give you peace in death, and through CHRIST to secure

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your eternal felicity. At the same time, addressing myself in particular to the inconsiderate and the young, I warned you of the numerous temptations incident to this stage of Christianity—from indolence, from an excessive love of animal pleasure, from vain company, and from the tumults of worldly business; and stated the fatal consequences, respectively arising from these several inducements to error.

In a subsequent discourse, I considered and deplored the sad case of religious languor; as gradually discovered by a failure in the duties of the closet, by a neglect of social worship, by want of regard for our fellow-Christians, by an undue attachment to sensual or secular pursuits, and by prejudices against some important principles of religion: to which I subjoined directions for recovery, and urged their immediate adoption. I then proceeded to represent the still more dreadful circumstance of a relapse into known and deliberate sin; and intreated the wretched offender to attempt an instant return—by deep humiliation before his Maker, by renewed regard to the
divine

divine mercy in CHRIST, by an open profession of repentance, where his crime had given public offence, and by a frequent review of his fall for the sake of future caution. It is my present purpose to consider the melancholy situation of the Christian, afflicted spiritually under the hiding of GOD's face, and temporally by the pressure of heavy calamities; suggesting in the conclusion some tests, by which he may examine and estimate his religious proficiency.

The inspired source, from which this phrase ("the hiding of GOD's face") is derived, will, I doubt not, secure for it your respect. Its meaning may be inferred from the opposite phrase, of GOD's *lifting up the light of His countenance* upon any one, of which *David* thus expresses the effect: *Thou hast put gladness in my heart, more than in the time that their corn and their wine increased. If I laughed (said Job, of his attendants) they believed it not, and the light of my countenance they cast not down.* The hidden face, of course, implies displeasure: *your iniquities* (cried the prophet) *have separated*

rated between you and your GOD, and your sins have hid His face from you, that He will not hear.

Neither is this displeasure, in the instance of the Deity, confined merely to the perishable things of temporal life: the whole tenor of Scripture evinces the contrary. It includes a deprivation of the sense of GOD's love, and of the tokens of His favour. And to this, my friends, whatever be the present sunshine and illumination of your souls, you are but too much exposed. You may but too quickly lose that lively perception of the divine glory, with which you are now enraptured. You may but too soon view the wisdom and power and mercy and holiness of your Maker, with little of complacency or of satisfaction. You may but too shortly be reduced to doubt, whether you do indeed belong to Him or not; and even venture to apprehend that your former high hopes were unsubstantial and delusive. Then will the ordinances, in which you now rejoice, become indifferent or uncomfortable to you. The truths of the gospel may be unfolded, and the privileges

leges of Christianity explained ; but you will have ceased to feel, that you have any *lot or part in these matters*—recollecting perhaps your previous taste for such inquiries, only to regret that it is lost ; and to infer that they, who were never possessed of it, are less miserable than yourselves.

Such, notwithstanding your continued attendance upon private and public worship, such may long be your condition ; and for a considerable period you may complain, with the Psalmist—*My God, I cry in the day-time, but thou hearest not ; and in the night-season, and am not silent : or with Job—Behold, I go forward, but He is not there ; and backward, but I cannot perceive Him : on the left-hand, where He doth work, but I cannot behold Him ; He hideth Himself on the right-hand, that I cannot see Him.* So that what seemed like religion in your hearts may be melted (as it were) into grief, or chilled into fear, or depressed into indifference.

Under these melancholy circumstances, let me advise you carefully to search—whether your present distress be indeed of spiritual origin, or rather arise from some dis-

order or external affliction, affecting your state of mind. By the inferior part of our nature the nobler, during their present intimacy of connection, is so greatly influenced, as to render the latter cause by no means improbable. Worldly difficulties likewise, by clouding and distracting the attention, frequently indispose us to religious enjoyments.

If however, without loss of health or embarrassment of fortune, with your animal spirits high and your thirst for gaiety undiminished, you feel your relish for devotion languishing, and a lethargic insensibility or paralytic weakness (with respect to pious exercises) invading the soul, you must seek more deeply for the source. This you will, in general, discover to be sin; some secret sin, which, though unnoticed by man, has not escaped the observation of the Supreme. In that case, you must not look

upon His righteous displeasure, merely as your calamity; but steadily *keep yourselves from the accursed thing*. Such is His gracious design, and with that design it should be your greatest concern to co-operate.

Enter therefore immediately upon a strict examination

examination of your consciences. Listen to their gentlest whispers. Trace every rising doubt, every fleeting suspicion; and pursue them into the inmost recesses of your breast. Profit alike by the counsels of friends, and by the reproaches of foes. Recollect, whatever may give you remorse upon your death-bed. Note it down; and proceed, till you can pronounce—"These are my remaining sins, and follies, and corruptions." Then *return to the Almighty, and thou shalt be built up: thou shalt put away iniquity far from thy tabernacles. Then shalt thou have thy delight in the LORD, and shalt lift up thy face unto GOD. Thou shalt make thy prayer unto Him, and He shall hear thee; and thou shalt pay thy vows, and the light shall shine upon thy ways.*

In the mean time—submit humbly to His discipline, acknowledge His justice, trust in His mercy. Confess that so many are the evils of your best days, so many the imperfections of your worthiest services, as to justify His severest frowns: and with holy serenity of soul *wait upon Him*, in steadfast hope that *He will return and have compassion*

on you—not utterly forgetting to be gracious, nor casting you off for ever.

While the darkness however continues, proceed diligently in the way of duty. Read, and pray, and meditate. Follow the *footsteps of the flock*, and you may perhaps meet the *Shepherd of your souls*. Not in the frivolous and transitory pleasures of the world, but in the holy exercises of devotion and self-command, seek your consolation; and to your surprise and joy you may find your Saviour near you, when you imagined yourselves cast out from His presence.

At all events, renew your application to Him with increased fervour; for *He is your peace. In Him, the Beloved, to the praise of the glory of His grace, ye are accepted.* Before Him then *pour out your complaint, and shew before Him your trouble.* Solicit pity and relief from Him, who *Himself suffered, being tempted.* Reviewing the records of His life and death, hearing His words and beholding His actions, you will surely in the end find a sacred tranquillity diffused over your souls; and the Comforter will at length *make you glad, according to the days wherein*

wherein ye have been afflicted, and to the years wherein ye have seen evil.

I proceed to consider the case of temporal suffering; to which the Christian, in common with others, is exposed.

Calamity is incident to the whole human race. *Man is born unto trouble, as the sparks fly upward.* Gird on your armour therefore, as men and as Christians, and prepare yourselves to encounter its onset. For this purpose, when you see others under affliction, inquire of yourselves—How you could support the same burdens. Above all, observing how liable mortal life is to sorrow, learn to moderate your expectations of earthly happiness; and elevate your views to that better world, where they are secure from disappointment. Ascribe your prosperity, while you are prosperous, to the special providence of God; through whom alone you remain unwounded, while the arrows of distress are flying around you, and so many fall by them *on the right-hand and on the left.*

And when at last your day of misfortune arrives, and you eat in your turn *the bread of*
adversity,

adversity, consider it as given by the same LORD, and lose not the sight of Him in any secondary and more immediate cause; but *humble yourselves under His mighty hand, that He may exalt you in due time.* Reflect, how WORTHILY FOR YOUR EVIL DEEDS YOU DESERVE TO BE PUNISHED: *—how often every mercy has been forfeited, and every judgment deserved:—how long He has hitherto borne with you:—how bountifully, by the continuance of many comforts, of which you might have been bereaved, He still blesses you. He could have added poverty to pain, or pain to poverty; or the alienation of friends to both; or the death of surviving connections to that of those, who are departed. Beware lest you provoke Him, by your unthankfulness, to such an extended exercise of His power.

Weigh moreover the wholesome tendency of discipline: and remember that, *whom the LORD loveth, He chasteneth; and scourgeth every son, whom He receiveth.* This consideration indeed should induce you not only to submit to calamities, but to rejoice

* Occ. in Coll. 4 Lent.

in them; not only to justify, but to glorify Him for their infliction. Reflect further—It is thus, that God would render me conformable to His own Son, who was *made perfect through sufferings*: it is thus, that He would train me up for complete glory. He knows best the “uses of adversity,” and its peculiar adaption to my present circumstances. This *tribulation* (if it be not my own fault) *will work patience, and patience experience, and experience hope; even a hope, which shall not make ashamed.*

To improve affliction however to the purposes for which it was sent, you must studiously investigate those purposes. You must labour to *hear the rod, and who hath appointed it.* You must examine your actions, your words, your thoughts; and pray that the Deity would so direct your inquiries, as to cause you to *turn unto Him, that smiteth you.* And, when you have discovered the meaning of the dispensation, you must set yourselves to an immediate correction of the cause; and cultivate a still greater submission to the divine allotments, a still calmer indifference to the present world, a still closer attachment

attachment to religious duties, and a still more steadfast looking-for of the *glory, which shall be revealed*. Then may you have speedy and adequate reason to say, *It is good for me, that I have been afflicted*; and to number your sharpest trials amongst the happiest and most salutary moments of your life.

Having *tasted that the LORD is gracious*, you may next wish to ascertain your religious proficiency. This is not to be estimated (either wholly, or chiefly) by an increase of knowledge, or of zeal, or of any other passionate impression of mind: but by the habitual determination of your will to God, and by your confirmed purpose to obey His commands. Knowledge indeed and zeal in religion are undoubtedly desirable; the former generally making it rational, and the latter usually proving it to be sincere. But with speculative knowledge, and rapturous zeal, true piety is by no means necessarily connected. Reason, employed upon the evidences and declarations of Christianity, may have filled the
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head with a well-digested system of orthodox divinity, when not a single doctrine of it has ever reached the heart : and an eloquent description of the sufferings of CHRIST, of the solemnity of judgment, of the joys of heaven, of the miseries of hell, may excite a transient emotion—even in the breast of an infidel. But you, my brethren, should have juster notions of spiritual advancement.

Inquire then, of your consciences—Whether divine love has, upon the whole, gained ground in you. Are you more and more sensible of the presence of God ; and do you delight, even under depression of spirit, in the idea that He is near you, and will *never leave you nor forsake you* ? Do you find a growing regard for His holy law, that transcript of His moral perfections ; inwardly convinced that *all his precepts, concerning all things, are right* ? Do you discern not only the necessity, but the reasonableness and the pleasure, of obedience ; and seek to serve Him, not more from a fear of His power, than from a veneration of His benevolence ? Is your affection towards your fellow-creatures more ardent ;
your

your perception of the endearing bonds,
 which unite all men in one common brotherhood, more lively; your anxiety to alleviate misery, wherever you can find it, more active; and the malignity of your nature daily more enfeebled? How do you sustain injuries? Can you stand their shock calmly; and, not being overcome of evil, seek to overcome evil with good? Do you improve in humility; observing more minutely, and mourning more sincerely, your numerous errors? And, feeling with deeper apprehension the infinite Majesty of God, do you perceive yourselves (as it were) annihilated in His presence, and shrunk into *less than nothing, and vanity*? Do you renew more frequently your fervent application to CHRIST; conscious that, however lessened be the disorders of your lives, corruption still lingers about your hearts? Do you solicit more earnestly the influences of the Holy Spirit; depending in all your efforts, from a sense of your natural weakness, upon the communications of His grace to *help your infirmities*? Do you, at the conclusion of your most religious day, feel yourselves

yourselves humiliated before the Supreme Being, by a conviction of your many deficiencies; and can you come to the *blood of sprinkling*, to free you from the guilt necessarily united with your best services? Do you receive the bounties of Providence with gratitude, as flowing from God; with a mixture of shame and confusion, as flowing upon the unworthy? Can you *in patience possess your souls*: preserve a steady serenity, even when He is taking away your dearest blessings, or inflicting His heaviest calamities; and look upon them as chastisements, intended in kindness, to lead you nearer to Himself? Are you anxious for the interests of Christianity, and the spiritual welfare of your fellow-creatures; and do you study to promote them, by every exertion in your power? Finally, are you more fully and practically convinced of the vanity of *the world, and the things that are in the world*? If the Almighty should summon you away suddenly, in the midst of your hopes and pursuits and enjoyments, could you leave them readily, and without regret?

regret? On the other hand, should He continue you for a long series of years, in the midst of cares and sorrows and adversity, could you endure them with perfect submission; and say—*Behold, here am I; let Him do to me, as seemeth good to Him?*

These questions involve some of the surest and most substantial evidences of religious proficiency. Search then, my brethren, anxiously search for them; and study daily to obtain them more and more—till *at length you come unto the perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of CHRIST*; and after having enjoyed the pleasures of those, who flourish eminently in the divine courts below, be established by Him in the paradise of God.

Now to God, &c.

SERMON

SERMON XII.

THE CHRISTIAN, EXULTING IN DIVINE BLESSINGS,
IS URGED TO SOCIAL EXERTION.

PSALM XXIX. 2.

*Give unto the LORD the glory due unto His
name; worship the LORD in the beauty of
holiness.*

I CONCLUDED my last discourse, my brethren, upon this subject, with supposing you in a greater or less degree conscious of spiritual proficiency: suffer me, in the present, to recommend to you those exercises of love and joy towards GOD, which so greatly become, and will in the end so highly exalt, the advancing Christian. Consider them, I beseech you, not less as your
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privilege, than as your duty. Love is the sublimest principle of obedience; and with love, so wisely directed and so certainly returned, joy is naturally connected. *Rejoice therefore in the LORD, ye righteous, and give thanks at the remembrance of His holiness.* Spend not your sacred moments merely in prayer, though that must have its daily portion: but allot a considerable part of them to the celestial employment of praise—an employment, to which the spirits of the blessed shall devote their happy eternity.

For have you not abundant cause to say, with the Psalmist—*How precious are thy thoughts unto me, O GOD! How great is the sum of them! If I should count them, they are more in number than the sand.* The favours, which you have received from Him, began with your existence: His eye saw your substance, yet being imperfect: He beheld you with a parent's care, when you were made in secret; and not only fashioned your members, when as yet there was none of them, but has kept them ever since, so that not one of them is broken. Look back upon the path, which you have trodden from your infancy to the

the present hour ; and say, whether you do not see it (as it were) thickly strown with memorials of His goodness. Recollect, how often there has been but a step between you and death : call to mind those chambers of sickness, whence perhaps you once thought that you should come forth no more ; apprehending with *Hezekiah* that, *in the cutting off of your days, you should go to the gates of the grave, and be deprived of the residue of your years.* Be grateful, where you may, that *the keepers of the house do not yet tremble, nor the strong men bow themselves :—that those who look out of the windows are not yet darkened, nor the daughters of music brought low :—that the silver cord is not yet loosed, nor the golden bowl broken, nor the pitcher broken at the fountain, nor the wheel broken at the cistern :—that the hand of Providence still braces your nerves, still supplies your spirits, and still provides for your enjoyment.* Express likewise your thanks to Him, for bestowing upon you hearts disposed to pity the wants of the necessitous, and minds anxious to devise, as well as hands prompt to execute, plans for their relief : for this also

cometh forth from Him—the Author of every benevolent inclination, of every judicious project, of every successful endeavour to promote the happiness of His creatures. Survey your circumstances in relative life; the friends and connections, by whom you are surrounded. Think, when they have been attacked by disease, how He hath in many instances restored them to you from the very brink of the tomb, and thus added new endearments to your intercourse of tenderness and affection. And forget not how powerfully, in other instances of a more melancholy issue, He supported those, whom in mysterious mercy He took unto Himself, under their last sufferings:—how graciously He enabled them to leave behind a character of virtue and piety, which hath embalmed their memories:—how compassionately He has sustained you, when almost sinking under the sorrow of recent separation; and caused you to find in the remembrance of a death, so useful to others and so glorious to themselves, matter of religious acquiescence, if not of exultation.

Such is the hasty sketch of His temporal
mercies :

mercies: and they demand your most fervent thanksgiving. What then must be your gratitude, upon a review of his spiritual kindneſſes!

Turn your eyes, I entreat you, *unto the rock whence ye were hewn, and to the hole of the pit whence ye were digged.* Conſider the ſtate, wherein Divine Grace firſt found you!—under what guilt!—under what inſenſibility!—in what danger!—in what ruin! Think what was, and oh! with ſtill deeper reflection think what would have been your ſituation! Amuſed with the trifles of time and ſenſe, you ſaw not the eternity, upon the borders of which you were ſtanding. The Almighty ſaw; and ſent you the Saviour, to ſnatch you from a perdition otherwiſe inevitable: and, *having obtained help of Him, you continue unto this day.*

He perhaps hath not only *bleſſed you*, but made *you a bleſſing*. Whatever good you may have effected, whatever evil you may have turned aſide; whomſoever you may have reclaimed from vice and miſery, to virtue and peace—all, all are of His doing.

Confine not, however, your obſervation to the bounties, with which you are already

encompassed; but advance your prospect still further, by the eye of faith, to the scenes of approaching futurity. Anticipate the now-unknown transports, with which, after you shall have deposited every burden in the grave, your immortal spirits will ascend holy and happy into the presence of their God—the source of all righteousness, and of all felicity. Think of the ecstasies, with which you will witness your LORD's second coming *in power and great glory*. Reflect, that your joys are the joys also of multitudes, whose cheeks glow and whose eyes sparkle with humble expectation of that awful event: many of them, probably, connected with you by the bonds of blood, or love, or friendship; and enraptured by the hope of your salvation. They, and you among them, shall shine with undecaying brightness, when the sun and the stars shall be extinguished. The *Father of lights* shall eternally pour forth His beams upon you, with a lustre ever-lasting in duration, and ever-growing in intensity.

Such must be the frequent exercises of
your

your souls before the LORD : and they will suggest a thousand delightful ideas; and unseal a thousand springs of pleasure for your enjoyment.

Such, however, will not be their only effect. Love so zealous will not exhaust itself in mere speculation; but, PURGING YOUR CONSCIENCE FROM DEAD WORKS TO SERVE THE LIVING GOD*, will produce unfeigned regard for your fellow-creatures, and unremitting efforts for their welfare.

“ Has the Supreme (you will say) looked down upon me so graciously : has He not only forgiven me innumerable offences, but also heaped upon me infinite favours—and shall I be languid, or negligent, in my exertions of gratitude? But *what shall I render unto Him, for all His benefits?* Instruct me, O ye oracles of eternal truth; instruct me, above all, O thou *Spirit of Wisdom*, how I may best approve my fidelity to Him, who has deserved it so well!”

The old commandment, given from the beginning, and continuing with unimpaired obligation throughout all ages, is—*that he who loveth GOD, love his brother also*—not

* Heb. ix. 14. occ. in Epist. 5 Lent.

in word, neither in tongue; but in deed, and in truth. You must therefore regard your neighbours, as yourselves; entertain an affection for the whole of animated nature; and, as far as your influence extends, labour to advance the universal welfare.

With this view, you must examine the peculiar circumstances of your station and character; in order to discover what opportunities of usefulness they furnish, and how those opportunities may most successfully be cultivated:—not for the purpose of glorying in your talents, *as if you had not received them*; but that, as *good and faithful servants*, you may give a satisfactory account of their application to Him, by whom they were committed to your care.

Has He bestowed upon you genius, or learning? It was not merely that you should gratify yourselves, or attract and dazzle the eyes of others, by the brilliant toys of literary amusement. Not for such frivolous indulgencies were those noble qualities intended: but as instruments—to improve and embellish human life, to support the cause of religion, to enforce the regulations of morality,

rality, to turn mankind from the pursuits of wickedness, and to *guide their feet into the way of peace.*

Do you possess power, public or private? It was conferred upon you by the Deity, that He might have His due honour; and that His creatures, placed under your government, whether domestic or national, might be happy. Reverence therefore the views of the supreme Legislator and Guardian of society; and let not your authority, whether distinguished by the sceptre of grace or by the sword of justice, *be borne in vain.*

Are you intrusted, by your fellow-citizens, with a share in the awful charge of enacting laws? Propose none, consent to none, which you do not conscientiously apprehend to be conformable to the will of God; and in the establishment of which, you do not firmly believe, that you shall be His *ministers for good.* Do you exercise the function, equally awful, of executing laws? Give them life and spirit, by unremitting energy in the discharge of the duties of your magistracy; and suffer not your eyes to wink, or to slumber, upon the tribunal of
your

your country. *Be sober, be vigilant, be active. Defend the innocent. Judge the poor of the people, save the children of the needy, and break in pieces the oppressor.*

Is your superintendence limited to your own family? Rule it for God. Administer its concerns upon the liberal principles, above recommended to the powerful and the great. Amongst your children and your servants, the humble subjects of your contracted empire, establish good order, and maintain regular discipline. Instruct them in the tenets of that religion, which teaches the necessity and reasonableness of social subordination; and accustom them to act in conformity to its directions. You cannot indeed by these means change their hearts, but you may strongly influence their conduct; and eventually render them useful members of the community, to which they belong.

Again—has God raised you to a degree of esteem amongst your neighbours, more than proportional to your station and property? Are your opinions sought? Is your friendship solicited? Consider this popularity,

pularity, not only as an additional incentive to your efforts, but also as multiplying your opportunities and increasing your ability, to do good. If your character then has any peculiar weight, throw it into the scale of virtue. Countenance the upright, and the pious. Stretch forth your hand to modest worth, sinking under depression or neglect. Be advocates of truth, examples of candour, and counsellors of peace. And allow not yourselves to be interrupted, in your generous career, by the petty attacks of envy or of calumny : but still study the general weal, and still persevere in your efforts to promote it—leaving to Providence the vindication of your name from the base charges of malevolence and jealousy ; which usually indeed involve their own detection, and recoil with aggravated infamy upon the heads of their authors.

Once more—has God blessed you with wealth ? Remember that riches often prove an incumbrance in the way of salvation, and render difficult the attainment of *the kingdom of heaven*. Let it therefore be your
daily

daily and earnest prayer, that you may be enabled to use them worthily. For this purpose, look around you, and explore the distresses to which the honest and the industrious are frequently exposed. Think of the comforts, which *your abundance might supply to their want*. Have not only a tongue prompt to display, but a purse also ready to relieve, their necessities; and despise the sordid excuses of those, who vainly endeavour to screen their avarice under the flimsy pretext of affected regard for their families, or of bounty secretly exhausted upon worthier objects. Observe the children of poverty, wandering naked and ignorant about the streets, the prey of every vice and the victims of every misery. Watch over their bodily sicknesses. Provide for their spiritual sustenance. If you have not much, give little: and forget not that a mite, contributed in the full liberality of the heart, is recorded in the gospel, as one of the most splendid exemplifications of human charity.

God does not however enjoin you to *bestow all your goods, to feed the poor; or*
to

to renounce the innocent comforts and gratifications, appropriate to your rank and fortune. The continuance of society, as at present established, requires that some should enjoy the elegancies of life; by furnishing which many are supported, with greater advantage to themselves and with more security to the public, than by an equivalent allowance under the denomination of alms.

Neither can it be acceptable to the Giver of all good, that His gifts should be spurned as if they were snares and curses, rather than benefits. This principle indeed, carried to its extreme rigour, would imply a conspiracy against the whole system and feelings of nature.

Use then His bounties, but use them with prudence and moderation: lest that *become a trap, which should have been for your welfare*. Compare your income with your expenditure. That may be lavish in you, which in another of superior wealth is not only venial, but commendable. And do not acquit yourselves of extravagance, merely because you are not overwhelmed with embarrassments. If by
self-

self-indulgence you are obliged to contract your charity within narrower limits, than your conscience would assign, God will frown upon your prodigality; and you ought immediately, as you will answer it at His dread tribunal, to make suitable retrenchments. Every neglected opportunity draws after it an irreparable loss, which will influence your eternal destination; still further incapacitates the mind for the framing of generous projects; still more disables the hand for actually doing good, by *a ready and liberal distribution*.

Do not complain, my brethren, of the rigour of these directions. I am only endeavouring to divert the sums, often running to waste upon light or vicious pleasures, into a purer channel. Even that frugality, on which alone such systematic munificence can securely rest, far from depressing your character amongst the wise and the good, will highly exalt it. This however, singly regarded, is an inadequate, is an unworthy motive. You will have nobler objects. I address you, as *children of God and members of*
CHRIST,

CHRIST, and therefore united in a common brotherhood with the poorest of believers ; I address you, as *heirs together of the grace of life*, and therefore bound to cultivate sentiments dignified and sublime, in some proportion at least to your glorious inheritance.

Consider, how little you have hitherto effected ; when compared with what might have been effected by the gifts of nature, by the capacities of condition, by the time, the wealth, and the influence which you have possessed :—how, through your own inactivity or folly, you are constrained to look back upon a barren wilderness, where you might have observed fruitful fields and a springing harvest :—how justly, in consequence, you deserve to be stripped of all ; to be brought to an immediate account ; to be condemned as unfaithful to God, to your fellow-creatures, and to yourselves ; and to be *cast out into outer darkness, where shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth*.

If these reflections open your hearts to the claims of indigence and distress, return
 thanks

thanks to that Being, by whom the change has been produced. Pray to Him to guide you in bestowing His bounties, as conscientious almoners, with wisdom and fidelity: and (if it be His gracious will) to *multiply your seed sown, and increase the fruits of your righteousness*; to prosper you in your worldly affairs, that you may have more to impart to *the poor and needy*; and thus to lead you forward, blessing and blessed, to the region of infinite plenty and everlasting benevolence.

Now to God, &c.

SERMON

SERMON XIII.

THE CHRISTIAN, JOYFUL IN DEATH AND JUDGMENT,
AND BY HIS DYING BEHAVIOUR HONOURING GOD.

REV. XXII. 20.

*He, which testifieth these things, saith—
“Surely, I come quickly”; Amen. Even
so, come, Lord JESUS.*

TO us, my brethren, as well as to the beloved disciple in the island of *Patmos*, are these solemn words addressed by the Saviour—*Surely, I come quickly*. Yes, very quickly will He come, through the opening gates of death, to lead us into the invisible world. Nor will it be long ere the same Saviour, *now standing before the door*, will come in His more awful character

O ter

ter of Judge: for, though centuries may previously pass away, these form but a point of time to Him, with whom *one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.* In both its acceptations, therefore, I trust that you can answer the dread assurance with a joyful "*Amen. Even so, come, Lord JESUS.*" Thy arrival (in either sense) far from being terrible to us, is the object of our anxious hope, of our ardent and longing expectation."

This state of Christian feeling and sentiment, however, though in itself highly reasonable, is seldom to be discovered. Nature, tenacious of life, and unwilling to exchange her familiar abode for an unknown land, generally recoils from the thought of departure; or, struck with the alarm of universal conflagration, sinks under the *fearful looking-for* of futurity. Let me then endeavour, in this my concluding discourse, to suggest some reasons why, instead of shrinking from her two-fold consummation—of death and judgment, she should rather spring forward to it with gratitude and delight.

CHRIST

CHRIST comes—to release you from sorrow, to terminate your conflict with corruption, and to receive you unto Himself.

He calls you away, indeed, from the present world: but what is the present world, that you should cling to it so closely? how few, how groveling are its pleasures—how many, how severe its afflictions! Look back upon *the days of the years of your pilgrimage*; and, though you must acknowledge that the *goodness and mercy* of divine Providence *have ever followed you*, yet has not that very Providence occasionally placed thorns about your pillow, as a necessary but painful intimation, that *this is not your rest*. Review your withered hopes, your blasted enjoyments; if there yet remains of them any vestige, beside the melancholy memorial imprinted on your own hearts. Turn your eyes unto the grave, which has closed perhaps upon your most lovely and most beloved friends, prematurely snatched away in the bloom and vigour of youth: and reflect that, if you are yourselves spared for a few years longer, it will be only to witness the extended ravages of the unrelenting De-

stroyer. Consider the living, as well as the dead; the triumphs of sin, as well as those of mortality. Behold human nature, in its sad condition of sorrow and apostasy; and say, whether a wise and pious man would decide, that *it is good for us to be here*. The external and bodily distresses of mankind are so numerous, and (what is still more wretched) their mental disorders are so complicated and diversified, that the earth appears to be little better than an immense hospital, where sensibility must be agonized at every step, and in every instant. Are you Christians, and can you observe without the deepest concern, how some degrade themselves by avowed and shameless profligacy;—how others dishonour their Lord, even whilst they call themselves His followers? Or can you regret to leave a world, where the righteous and the compassionate must be *vexed, from day to day*, by so many spectacles of guilt and of misery?

Nay, do you not perceive something within your own breasts—which, were it to continue, would harass you in the society of the blessed, and embitter even paradise itself?

self? Are you not hourly struggling with some residue of corruption, or mourning in secret over some still-unconquered infirmity? Do you not daily find your spirits languid, when you would wish them to be most active, in the praise of your Maker?—your hearts insensible to His love, and your hands feeble in His service, even when *to will is present with you*? Does not your life, in short, in its best moments, appear to you unprofitable; when compared with what, as you feel, it ought to be—with what, as you know, it might be?

Should you not then rejoice, that CHRIST comes to deliver you from these distresses; to lead you into realms of uninterrupted happiness, and of untainted purity; and to place you near Himself? *Absent from the body, you will be present with the LORD.* How often, in adversity, have you bent your eyes to those blissful shores!—how often prayed that the stormy gulf, by which you are separated from them, were crossed in safety, and yourselves *brought to your desired haven*!—how often reposed with delight upon that declaration of your Re-

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deemer—*Father, I will that they also, whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am ; that they may behold my glory, which Thou hast given Me.*

In its second interpretation likewise, the coming of CHRIST should be the subject of your sincere thanksgiving. The day of this divine advent will, indeed, be an important day ; a day, on which nature will be convulsed “ with pangs unfelt before,” and fade away in amazement from the presence of her Judge. No earthquake, no eruption of burning mountains, no desolation of countries by flood or by flame, can supply an adequate idea of that dreadful appearance—when *the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat ;* and there shall be *a great cry*, not in one kingdom only (as formerly in *Egypt*) but resounding throughout the universe. Yet, as Christians, you must surely exclaim—“ Let this eventful day approach, with all its terrors !” Yea, like those described by the apostle, you ought to be *looking for and hastening unto* its tremendous brightness : for your
LORD

LORD Himself, to vindicate His dispensations and to display His magnificence, will then *descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God*; clothed with *His own glory, and His Father's*; and *coming to be glorified in His saints, and to be admired in all them that believe.*

His persecutors and His revilers, those who condemned Him, and those who in profane mockery *bowed the knee before Him*, shall then appear dismayed and *utterly cast down*; or, in wild despair, shall cry to *the mountains and rocks—"Fall on us, and hide us from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: for the great day of His wrath is come, and who shall be able to stand"?*

On that day He will break the bars of the grave, re-animate your sleeping dust, *fashion it like unto His glorious body*, and array it with the robes of holiness. You may now be stigmatized by reproachful appellations, or accused of entertaining hopes and wishes, which your souls abhor; but He will then *bring forth your righteousness as the light, and your judgment as the noon-day.* While he putteth

away all the wicked of the earth like dross, you shall be called good and faithful servants, shall be pronounced the blessed of the Father, shall be summoned to enter into the joy of your Lord, and shall receive from His hands a crown of glory, that fadeth not away.

Nor shall this your triumph be merely the triumph of a day. When CHRIST ascends from judgment, you shall ascend with Him, *unto His Father and your Father, and to His GOD and your GOD.* Under new and shining forms, attended undoubtedly with correspondent illumination of intellect, you shall fix your eternal abode in that *fulness of joy, which is in His presence*; and amidst those *pleasures, which are at His right-hand for evermore.* Rising from the ashes of an expiring world to the *new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness*, you shall ever be with each other and *with the LORD.* Immortal ages, rolling away, shall find your happiness still unchanged; or changed only by increasing, as you advance nearer and nearer to Him, who is the source and centre of all felicity.

And now look around you, and single out
(if

(if you can) some hope or some enjoyment, for the sake of which you would say—
 “ LORD JESUS, delay thy coming ! ”—for the sake of which you would hesitate to say
 “ —LORD JESUS, come quickly ! ”

Thus, my brethren, have I attempted to lead you through the successive stages of *Repentance toward GOD, and Faith toward our Lord JESUS CHRIST*: with their natural consequences of fervent love towards Both, evinced by constant activity in Their service, and the rapturous anticipation of a happy eternity. And I would humbly hope that the time, which we have bestowed upon these investigations, may have been attended, by the divine blessing, with beneficial effects.

There still remains to be considered one state—a state, through which we must all pass, when we close our earthly career—I mean, the dreariness and solitude of the grave. If therefore Providence do not cut you off by some unexpected accident, or by the violence of distemper affect your under-
 standing

standing in such a manner, as to preclude the exercise of your faculties in that awful hour, I would offer you my last counsels, with respect to the conduct then to be observed. And may GOD, *making His strength perfect in my weakness*, enable me to address you upon this most solemn subject, with an efficacy proportioned to its interest and its importance.

After dismissing then, wholly, from your minds the affairs of this world—which should always be arranged before that final moment, when you are just stepping into the next—let me advise you to review your spiritual circumstances with the utmost attention, that you may be *prepared to meet your GOD*: for it is an awful thing to enter into the divine presence; your term of probation expired, and the fate of your futurity decided. Humiliate yourselves again before Him; and again solicit His mercies, as promised in *the new covenant through JESUS*, its mediator. Summon up all the fortitude of your souls, to bear His inflictions. Whatever He ordains, *let patience have her perfect work*. Indulge not yourselves

selves in one murmuring word, or one
 repining thought: but remember, that the
 Saviour TOOK UPON HIM OUR FLESH,
 AND SUFFERED DEATH UPON THE CROSS,
 THAT ALL MANKIND SHOULD FOLLOW
 THE EXAMPLE OF HIS GREAT HUMILI-
 TY*. Hear Him praying—O MY FA-
 THER, IF THIS CUP MAY NOT PASS AWAY
 FROM ME, EXCEPT I DRINK IT, THY
 WILL BE DONE †. See Him stretched
 on His tree of agony, exposed to the scoffs
 and insults of His inveterate enemies—
 and enduring all *as a lamb, which is brought
 to the slaughter*. WHEREFORE GOD HATH
 ALSO HIGHLY EXALTED HIM, AND GIVEN
 HIM A NAME WHICH IS ABOVE EVERY
 NAME: THAT AT THE NAME OF JESUS
 EVERY KNEE SHOULD BOW, OF THINGS
 IN HEAVEN, AND THINGS IN EARTH, AND
 THINGS UNDER THE EARTH; AND THAT
 EVERY TONGUE SHOULD CONFESS THAT
 JESUS CHRIST IS LORD, TO THE GLORY
 OF GOD THE FATHER ‡. Do ye therefore

* Occ. in Coll. Sund. next before Easter.

† *Matt.* xxvi. 42. occ. in II Lesson, *ib.*

‡ *Phil.* ii. 9—11. occ. in Epist. *ib.*

in like manner, in the near prospect of your emancipation, *reckon your present sufferings as not worthy to be compared with the glory, which shall be revealed.*

Thus may your behaviour prove, to the edifying of others, that *tribulation worketh patience, and patience experience, and experience hope; and hope maketh not ashamed, because the love of GOD is shed abroad in your hearts by the Holy Ghost, which is given unto you.*

Now also bear an honourable testimony to religion. Declare to your surrounding friends the comfort, which you have ever derived from it. Tell them, how it heightened the splendour of your prosperity, how it softened the gloom of your distress, how it has sustained you in the day of sickness, how it cheers you in the very moment of death. At such a season, your words will be peculiarly impressive: your infirmities will invest them with an eloquence, which in your robust health they never possessed; and you will speak with authority, and with effect. When *the time draws near that you must die, and the hour of your departure is at hand, ex-*
press

press to them with holy joy your inward serenity and peace. Teach them what you feel of the vanity of the world, and of the substantial consolations of the gospel; that they may be persuaded to *hold to the one, and to despise the other*: for they too, in their turn, must lie down upon a death-bed; and, destitute of earthly support, will then need all the consolations which the gospel can bestow.

Charge them to spend their lives in the divine service. A dying admonition may be successful, where every other has failed. Make the trial, at least; and scatter the good seed of the word, leaving it to God, at His own appointed period, to *give the increase*. Above all—inform them how entirely and cheerfully you depend for salvation, not upon your own obedience, but upon the merits and mediation of the Redeemer. Let them see, that you die (as it were) at the foot of the cross; and *enter into that within the vail*, as with the *blood of sprinkling* fresh upon you.

Finally—to cheer your fainting hearts, in this dark and painful journey, take in your hands

hands the *oracles of God*: and, whatever be the commotion of animal nature, endeavour to compose your souls to a sacred silence—while, in words such as these, with which I shall conclude, they supply you with advice and with encouragement. *Fear thou not, for I am with thee; be not dismayed, for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness. And He is not a man, that He should lie; neither the son of man, that He should repent. Hath He said, and shall He not do it: or hath He spoken, and shall He not make it good? This God is our God for ever and ever: He will be our guide, even unto death. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for Thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me. I shall behold thy face in righteousness; I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness. Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth; my flesh also shall rest in hope. For, if we believe that JESUS died and rose again, even so them also, which sleep in JESUS, will*

God

GOD bring with Him. This (saith **CHRIST** Himself) is the will of Him, that sent Me—that of all, which He hath given Me, I should lose nothing; but should raise it up again, at the last day. I go to prepare a place for you: and, if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also. These (clothed with white robes, and bearing palms in their hands) are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of **GOD**, and serve Him day and night in His temple: and He, that sitteth on the throne, shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb, which is in the midst of the throne, shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and **GOD** shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.

Well may the Christian, upon this review of the divine word, inquire in triumph—O Death, where is thy sting? O Grave, where is thy

thy victory? Well may he return thanks
 to GOD, *which giveth him the victory, through*
our Lord JESUS CHRIST. Well may
 he sing—*Blessing, and honour, and glory, and*
power be unto Him, that sitteth upon the throne,
and to the Lamb for ever and ever. Amen.

Now to GOD, &c.

ROME

ROME IS FALLEN!

A SERMON,

PREACHED AT THE VISITATION HELD AT

SCARBOROUGH,

JUNE 5, 1798.

WITH NOTES AND ILLUSTRATIONS.

SECOND EDITION,

REVISED AND CORRECTED.

Ἡσχυνθην ὑπὲρ τῶν ἀλλῶν, ὅσοι μηδὲν τῶν πολλῶν οὔτε βελ-
τιος, μέγα μὲν οὐκ εἰ μὴ καὶ πολλὰ χεῖρες, ἀνιπτοῖς χερσὶν (ὃ δὲ
λεγεται) καὶ ἀμνητοῖς ψυχαῖς, τοῖς ἀγνώτατοῖς ἑαυτοὺς ἐπεισ-
αγῶσι· καὶ πρὶν ἀξιοὶ γενεσθαι προσιέναι τοῖς ἱεροῖς μεταποιον-
ται τῷ βηματος, θλιβούται τε καὶ ὠδυνῶνται περὶ τὴν ἁγίαν τράπε-
ζαν, ὥσπερ οὐκ ἈΡΕΤΗΣ ΤΥΠΟΝ ἀλλ' ΑΦΟΡΜΗΝ ΒΙΟΤ
τὴν ταξίν ταυτὴν εἶναι νομιζούτες, καὶ ΛΕΙΤΟΥΡΓΙΑΝ ὕΠΕΤ-
ΘΗΤΟΝ ἀλλ' ΑΡΧΗΝ ΑΝΕΞΕΤΑΣΤΟΝ.—Ὡς εἰ καὶ γήσῃ
τὴν φορὰν κρείσσον ἢ καὶ ἡμᾶς, ἀλλὰ τὸ γε μισεῖν καὶ αἰσχυ-
νεσθαι μέρος εὐσεβείας καὶ τοῦ σμικροτάτου.

(GREGOR. NAZIANZ. *Orai. Apolog.*)

ROME IS FALLEN!

A SERMON

PREACHED AT THE VESPER SERVICE AT

REARBOURCH.

JUNE 4, 1872.

WITH NOTES AND ILLUSTRATIONS.

SECOND EDITION.

REVISED AND CORRECTED.

THE FALL OF ROME, AND THE
FUTURE OF THE CHURCH.
A SERMON BY THE REV. J. H. WILSON,
OF NEW YORK. WITH NOTES AND
ILLUSTRATIONS. SECOND EDITION.
REVISED AND CORRECTED.
NEW YORK: PUBLISHED BY
J. H. WILSON, 15 NASSAU ST.
1872.

TO
HUMPHREY OSBALDESTON, Esq.

TO WHOSE ALMOST-UNSOLICITED PATRONAGE

I OWE

HOME AND INDEPENDENCE,

I INSCRIBE,

WITH SINCERE GRATITUDE AND RESPECT,

THE FOLLOWING DISCOURSE,

AS

THE FIRST FRUIT

OF THAT (I TRUST, NOT UNPROFITABLE) LEISURE,

WHICH HE SO LIBERALLY BESTOWED.

F. W.

HUNMANBY, *June*, 1798.

TO

HUMPHREY OSBALDESTON Esq.

TO WHOM ALMOST UNSOLICITED PATRONAGE

I OWE

HONOR AND INDEBTEDNESS

I EXPRESS

WITH SINCERE GRATITUDE AND RESPECT

THE FOLLOWING DISCOURSE

THE FIRST PART

OF THAT (A REPLY) AND UNRESISTED (REMARKS)

WHICH HE HAS FREELY ALLOWED

L. M.

HUMPHREY, Esq. 1793.

ROME IS FALLEN!

REVELATION XIV. 8.

*Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city,
because she made all nations drink of the wine
of the wrath of her fornication.*

IT has been judiciously contended, in opposition to the vague and fanciful conjectures of visionary expositors, that prophecy (which, from its very nature and object, is usually obscure) can only be interpreted by the event, and that its sure comment is alone to be found in its completion*. To profess indeed thoroughly to understand it, before it be thoroughly fulfilled, is to usurp the office of the prophet without his inspiration, and thus to invite detection and disappointment†. But here we must care-

* See Note (A) at the end of the Sermon.

† See Note (B).

fully distinguish between obscurity and equivocation, lest we confound the Christian predictions with the ambiguous responses of *Delphi* and *Dodona*. Let us remember that the oracles of paganism were studiously framed to adapt themselves, by an uncertain syntax, to any catastrophe: whereas the Scriptural prophecies have always a peremptory, though not a perspicuous meaning; a long-doubtful, it must be acknowledged, but an unequivocal and determined signification.

These observations apply with particular force and pertinency to the mysterious pages of the Apocalypse. Barbarous even to solecism* in its style, of an involved and intricate construction, and loaded with dark and apparently-wild allegory—the Revelation of St. *John* has alternately been a subject of perplexity to the serious, and of contempt or ridicule to the profane reader†; and by its seals, and its trumpets, and its vials, for a series of centuries, has successively engaged and baffled the efforts of all its commenta-

* See Note (C).

† See Note (D).

tors.

tors. Much, however, as they have generally differed in expounding many of its enigmatical passages, upon the modern counterpart of that *Babylon*, whose crimes and punishment it so accurately delineates, they have still more generally agreed; and it requires at present but little either of ingenuity to discover, or of courage to assert, that the time for confirming this their concurrent interpretation is at last arrived: *ROME is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.* ROME—a name endeared by so many recollections and associations to the statesman and the soldier, to the admirer of arts and the man of letters; a name, which conjures up to our imagination the brightest visions of literary and of martial glory: ROME—who in her earlier days filled the world with her lustre, enlightening even while she enslaved mankind, and who afterwards by her papal incantations could have called “millions of swords from their scabbards, to avenge a look that threatened her with insult:” ROME

—*is fallen*, without a struggle; and who amongst us shall breathe a sigh of regret for her fate!

I shall not be charged, I trust, with ungenerously triumphing over an old man's distresses—when I say, that I rejoice to see the Sovereign Pontiff, who once trod upon the neck of royalty, crouching himself beneath the insolent foot of a ferocious and implacable republic. What Protestant does not hear with pleasure that those thunders* at length are silent, which issued during so long a period from the gloomy recesses of the *Vatican*, to convulse *Europe*; shaking the allegiance of subjects, and hurling princes from their thrones? What lover of peace does not learn with exultation that those lightnings, which so often blasted the olive of *Christendom*, are quenched for ever? Ought we, who should anxiously wish the prophecies fulfilled, to weep over their accomplishment? Independently of this consideration, is the downfall of the Papacy in itself an event to be deplored?

* See Note (E).

Would

Would it have cost the intrepid *Luther*, the rigorous *Calvin*, nay the mild and gentle *Melancthon* one tear, to be informed that the arrogancy of the proud was ceased, and the haughtiness of the terrible laid low?—They eat the fat, and they clothed them with the wool; they killed them that were fed: but they fed not the flock. The diseased did they not strengthen, neither did they heal that which was sick, neither did they bind up that which was broken, neither did they bring again that which was driven away, neither did they seek that which was lost, but with force and with cruelty did they rule them. And they were scattered, because there was no shepherd. —Therefore—thus saith the LORD GOD, Behold, I am against the shepherds: and I will require my flock at their hand, and I will cause them to cease from feeding the flock; neither shall the shepherds feed themselves any more: for I will deliver my flock from their mouth, that they may not be meat for them.

To trace minutely the lamentable corruptions of Christianity, and state to you how first, foregoing her primitive and peculiar

cular character of simplicity*, she began to array herself with the gaudy ornaments of *Oriental* and *Grecian* philosophy: or how the successors of the Fisherman, under the imposing name of "The Servant of Servants," gradually usurped the dominion of the universe; and, giant-like, dared to wage war with heaven itself—forms no part of my present purpose. I pass over the legendary history of their apocryphal revelations, and their precarious miracles†; their adoration of the Host, their invocation of saints and angels, and their worshipping of images. I spare you the afflictive recital of their crusades, and their massacres, and their inquisitions; their dispensing with the performance of indispensable duties, and their selling pardons for unpardonable crimes‡. I stop not to inveigh against their *doctrines of devils—**forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats*; or their assumption of more-than-human powers, and titles, and prerogatives§—their infallibility, their ho-

* See Note (F).

† See Note (G).

‡ See Note (H).

§ See Note (I).

linefs,

liness, and their divinity. Suffice it to say, that temporal ambition, in her maddest delirium, never raged so fiercely; the most extravagant projects of civil despotism are comparatively tame, and rational, and innocent. I quit therefore the contemplation of this disgusting medley, this heterogeneous combination of hypocrisy and superstition, of idolatry and blasphemy; to examine as concisely as possible the principle, from which the Popedom seems chiefly to have derived its portentous and morbid magnitude, and to which it undoubtedly in a great measure owes its fall—I mean, its secularity.

When successive encroachments had glutted the coffers and almost satiated the avarice of the *Roman* Bishop, and his tiara was now studded with gems forced or purloined from the other crowns of *Europe*, its attainment quickly became an object of criminal competition. *The fine linen, and purple, and silk, and scarlet* of this mystic *Babylon* proved temptations too powerful for the relaxed austerity of ecclesiastical virtue. Acquired by intrigue, it was worn

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(as might naturally be expected) with iniquity: the plots of the conclave were worthy harbingers of the practices of the Pontificate. Stung by the inordinate lust of wealth and power, this apostolical *Cæsar* declined no expedient however profligate, shrunk from no enormity however great, which contributed to improve the once-humble patrimony of *St. Peter*. For this, the pagan rites of apotheosis were succeeded by the kindred mummary of canonization: for this, saints took possession of the temples* (and, with them, of the worship and offerings) formerly dedicated to heathen deities. The cries of torture, and the shouts of triumphant persecution, rose from all quarters in mingled horror; and wheels, and stakes, and scaffolds every where obtruded themselves, with painful prominence, upon the eye of sensibility and reflection. The whole body of the clergy were formed into one immense engine of spiritual domination: sequestered from the sigh and the smile of social sympathy, unsoftened and uncontrolled

* See Note (K).

by the tenderness or the interests of domestic life, by prejudices and by habits insulated (as it were) from their species, if not in some degree opposed to them, and rigid for the most part in unprofitable indolence, the secular and the regular priest alike ceased to be the citizen and the man. The people were industriously kept in what was called a wholesome darkness; that is, in a total ignorance of their legitimate rights and duties*. Sanctuaries were thrown open for assassins, and licences issued to prostitutes†: and, when neither licences nor sanctuaries could enable them to elude the just severity of conscience, even from that pursuer they found a sure refuge, in the unbounded asylum of indiscriminating and universal absolution. Thus did ROME *make all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication*. Lukewarm in what regarded the propagation of genuine religion, the zeal of her Sacred Consistory was only rendered fervent by the dangerous heresy of such as said, that *they be no gods, that are*

* See Note (L).

† See Note (M).

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† See Note (M).

made with hands : for by this craft they had their wealth ; and they feared lest that magnificence should be destroyed, which all Europe and the world worshipped. In a word—the most scandalous corruption, the most virulent intolerance, and the most abandoned nepotism characterized this heaven-ordained impeccable administration, this thrice-holy hierarchy—composed of Cardinal-Bishops, Cardinal-Deacons, and Cardinal-Priests. But it is done. There has been a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake and so great—and the cities of the nations have fallen : and great Babylon has come in remembrance before GOD, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of His wrath.

In my application of what has been advanced—though, in truth, I can hardly make any application, from this brief sketch of an establishment so unlike our own*—it might perhaps become me to apologize for

* See Note (N).

the explicitness, if explicitness on such an occasion can require an apology, with which I intend to express myself: but this is not a place, neither are these times, for ceremony. If indeed I offend by mis-stating the errors, which appear to me to mislead a considerable portion of our profession, I shall thankfully receive your reproof; but if I only incur reprehension for delivering unpalatable, though necessary, truths—at a period like the present, when the Almighty *has arisen to shake terribly the earth*—in that case, I must not fear to offend you all. *With me, in reality, it is a small thing to be judged of man's judgment:—He, that judgeth me, is the LORD.* I have no pleasure in laying open the foibles of my fellow-labourers, *for that I also myself am compassed with infirmity:—I beseech you therefore, brethren, suffer the word of exhortation*; and consider me, throughout the sequel of this discourse, as wishing more to warn, than to censure; as solicitous to prevent, rather than to correct.

Previously, however, let us weigh the necessity of increased vigilance, imposed upon
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the *watchmen of the house of Israel*, even if their former vigilance had not in any degree been relaxed, by the alarming prevalence of infidelity and vice. Men have always complained, said a late eminent primate*, of their own times; and always with too much reason. But though it is natural to think those evils the greatest which we feel ourselves, and therefore mistakes are easily made in comparing one age with another, yet in this we cannot be mistaken—that an open and professed disregard to religion is become, through a variety of unhappy causes, the distinguishing character of the present age: that this evil is grown to a great height in the metropolis of the nation; is daily spreading through every part of it; and, bad in itself as any can be, must of necessity bring most others after it.—Christianity, he adds, is now ridiculed and railed at, with very little reserve; and the teachers of it, without any at all.—It must be owned we are not by any means, even the best of us, what we ought to be; and the present state of

* See Note (O).

things calls loudly upon us to correct our mistakes, to supply our deficiencies, and do all we are able for the honour of God and the happiness of mankind. If we can be unconcerned now, we have neither piety nor common prudence in us.

Christianity has indeed, of late, been rudely assailed. Temples and palaces have sunk promiscuously together in foreign countries, beneath the overwhelming sweep of the tempest of revolution; and thrones and altars lie, broken and blended by its disastrous fury, in undistinguishable ruin. That tempest has hitherto, it is true, only covered our shores with the wrecks: we observe the gloom upon our horizon, but it is distant; we see the lightnings flash, but they are happily for us remote. The enemies of Christianity however amongst us, though from her stronger position they have been unsuccessful in their attacks, are still many, and audacious, and persevering*. With a troop of arguments (if they may be complimented with the name of arguments)

* See Note (P).

consisting chiefly of veterans long discharged for inefficiency, re-inforced occasionally by a few raw and still more ineffective recruits, they have dared to think of storming the citadel of God. They have reared their short and fragile ladders, they have advanced their feeble battering-rams; and they have retired from before it, as their predecessors in the same unnatural warfare have ever done, defeated and disgraced: impregnable to force and to fraud from without, it may bid defiance to the united efforts of its foes, provided the garrison remain alert and vigilant within. This or that establishment perhaps may, and, if corrupt, most assuredly will pass away; but the word of that Being, who has promised that *the gates of hell shall not prevail against His church, will not pass away. Let the flood arise, and the stream beat vehemently upon her; no matter:—they shall not be able to shake her, for she is founded upon a rock.*

Again—as an additional incentive to activity—let us consider that the gospel, even in better days than these, is a most awful message.

message. Foretold by a long succession of prophets; proclaimed upon its arrival, and attended in its consummation, by angels; contained in a history, resting on the most unquestionable evidence, and written with the pen of inspiration; attested during its progress by the Holy Spirit, and sealed with the seal of martyrdom—it makes a solemn demand upon us for attention; and must give us pause, when we reflect that its issues, as far as they can depend on man, depend upon us. And, as the end of our appointment is the highest, so are the means which it employs the most honourable and praise-worthy: simplicity of life and sincerity of purpose, talent and the sedulous cultivation of talent, are all necessary to the discharge of our many and arduous functions. Ours is indeed a heavy responsibility, poorly acquitted by the brief labours (shall I call them labours?) of a periodical sabbath industry—the rapid mechanical recital of a liturgy from the reading-desk; and the delivery, equally rapid and mechanical, of a flimsy piece of morality, or perhaps a dry

metaphysical disquisition, from the pulpit*. Ours it is (to avail myself of the eloquent language of a modern Divine†) to preach the gospel to the poor, to bind up the broken-hearted, not so much to rejoice with those that rejoice, as to weep with those who weep; to be partakers of the tribulations of the gospel; to carry the triumphant banners of the cross into the chilling penury and desolation of a cottage. Ours to bear the terrors of the LORD to rough, fullen, and boisterous offenders; to snatch the moment of pain or danger, to persuade men. Ours to open the well-spring of comfort to eager anxious penitents, trembling between the two stages of existence—in time, and in eternity; to intercept despair, and to repress presumption; to support the dying, and to warn the living. Ours, in this work, to face the inclemency of the seasons; to brave the contagion of pestilential maladies, in prisons and lazar-houses. Ours to perform all this to the poor and friendless, and by the unremitting exertions of body and

* See Note (Q).

† See Note (R).

mind,

mind, soul and spirit, through the might of CHRIST to abate the bitterness of the curse, by which *sin came into the world, and death by sin*. Still more—ours it is to discharge such duty, in the midst of obscurity and retirement; where no observation of the great follows, no earthly hope encourages, no human applause cheers or debases our labours—our only witnesses, GOD and our conscience; and our only return, the prayers of those we comfort and serve, and the expectation of that recompence, which awaits us at the resurrection of the just.

With the common feelings of our nature, we cannot be insensible to this alarming view of our complicated and important obligations; those obligations too, whatever interruption they may cause to our indolence, or to our amusements, are what we have solemnly and voluntarily undertaken. The vows of GOD are upon us: and as, on one side, we should tremble for the fulfilment of that fearful denunciation—*If thou dost not speak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity, but his blood will I*

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require

require at thine hand; so, on the other, we ought to thirst for the completion of that animating promise—They, that turn many to righteousness, shall shine as the stars for ever and ever.

If therefore I presume to charge any of the brotherhood with lukewarmness* or secularity, I do it under an irresistible conviction of the dreadful consequences which may result to their respective charges, and which must result to themselves, from their individual negligence.

Are we then, any of us, conscious of exhibiting more zeal and ardour in the pursuits of the field, than in those of our profession? Instead of *forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, and pressing toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of GOD in CHRIST JESUS*, do we confine our groveling and ignoble ambition to the paltry triumphs of the chace; reserving only a languid and exhausted devotion for the altar, to which we have pledged our best

* See Note (S).

services?

services? Or do we labour under the operation of that degrading principle, which stimulated the sons of *Zebedee* to seek worldly elevation; instead of *seeking the kingdom of CHRIST*, which (as He Himself has assured us) *is not of this world*—disputing with the mistaken spirit of the early disciples, *who shall be greatest*; and desirous of augmented preferment for its gold, rather than for its extending our sphere of evangelical utility? Or do we allow profane studies to engross our attention, for the purpose of obtaining a name in letters; to the neglect of that more valuable information conveyed by the *holy Scriptures*, which alone are able to make us wise unto salvation: preferring the dim reflection of human intellect to the true light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world*? Alas! my brethren, these are pursuits, and principles, and purposes unworthy of us, unworthy of any man†. If we can even be so forgetful of other and higher views, as to consult solely our present gratification, we still err most widely.

* See Note (T).

† See Note (U).

These trifling mis-directed labours, these petty struggles and competitions, these little bursts and flashes of ecstasy (in their best instances frivolous, in their worst barbarous, and in every instance transitory) want all the constituent parts of real happiness. For either they oppress us by their impetuosity, or they torment us upon review; or, by depending on circumstances beyond our control, they expose us to disappointment; or they abandon us, when perhaps we can least bear their absence, in solitude and adversity; or they harass us by excess; or they pall upon us by enjoyment. Whereas the pleasures arising from the discharge of our professional duties, considered merely in their temporal character, suppose our turbulent passions subdued; not only bear, but invite reflection; depend entirely upon ourselves, and of course follow us into retirement, and enliven it; are our best, nay our only, support under afflictions; and, never to be enjoyed to excess, will never nauseate by satiety. Forsaking then our pointers, and our fox-hounds, and our patron-

patron-hunting, let us become *followers of them, who through faith inherit the promises*. Fly but a few short years, and *the world passeth away, and the lusts thereof*; but *he, that doeth the will of God, abideth for ever*. Infirmary, or sorrow, or old age will speedily suspend our present energies; and how shall we then regret the golden season of our robust manhood, lavished—forgive me for adding, guiltily lavished—in employments of useless at least, if not of pernicious activity!

If I be told, that by some of these rigorous observations I condemn myself, I must answer, I fear I do: *In many things we offend all*. Hear the confession of an apostle, an apostle too, as he frankly affirms of himself, *in nothing behind the very chiefest apostles, though he were nothing*:——*I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing; for to will is present with me, but how to perform that which is good I find not: for the good, that I would, I do not; but the evil, which I would not, that I do**. After

* See Note (X).

this

this ingenuous avowal it cannot surely be disgraceful, however humiliating, to any Christian minister to plead guilty to the charge of imperfection : but this neither vitiates his doctrines, nor justifies his offending hearers. If no one may *cast a stone* at obvious and acknowledged error, except he, *who is without sin among us ; convicted by our consciences, we may go out of the temple one by one, beginning at the eldest, even unto the last.*

Here, however, I would correct two false impressions, which may have been made upon my audience ; the first relative to total and absolute seclusion, the other to excessive zeal.

I shall not then be understood, I trust, as recommending an entire sequestration from the business of the world, or from its rational pleasures ; for to a well-regulated intercourse with our fellow-creatures we must owe that knowledge of human nature, and of the sentiments, and habits, and feelings of mankind, which (to say nothing of our other obligations) will best enable us to
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fulfil the purposes of our mission. *I pray not*, said CHRIST of those who were with Him, *that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil.* They were not, after a short season of retirement and tranquillity, and still less of indulgence, to be put into possession of their everlasting reward : this would have been to arrest their moral progress, to disappoint them of their complete triumph, and to defraud the human community of its just right to the virtues and talents of all its members. But they were to remain, till their trial was accomplished, and till they were made *perfect through sufferings* : they were not only to carry the *glad tidings of great joy to all people* ; but were to exhibit the first instances of the gospel-influence on the human character, by their own *righteousness, and godliness, and faith, and love, and patience, and meekness.*

If then the few, whom our blessed LORD chose for His immediate followers, and honoured with the name of friends, were not to be *taken out of the world* ; their successors, the Christian priesthood, certainly

certainly cannot support their pretensions to such an extraordinary privilege: and we may determine that to fly to the sanctity of the altar, for protection from the duties and demands of social life, is not more contrary to reason than it is to revelation. When we regard the whole scheme of the gospel, in its striking analogy to the state and constitution of man, and when we examine the conduct of its first ministers and earlier profelytes, we are at a loss to find the origin of those enormous errors, which removed millions from their allotted stations in society, and begot the superstition that darkened the cloister, and the fanaticism that added savageness to the desert. The greater of these extravagancies indeed seems to have been of foreign growth. The *Jewish* Essenes* may in some sense be pronounced the founders of the Christian hermitage, and the authors of that wild scheme of austerity, which has excited the admiration of ignorant, and the compassion of enlightened ages. The feat of this phrensy, however, was not wide:

* See Note (Y).

a disease of climate, as it may be called, scarcely known in the western world, it was confined principally to *Egypt* and to *Syria*; there plunged in the depth of unexplored solitudes, the saints of the pillar and the cavern long ago had their day—a day, never to return. But the less inhuman seclusion of the monastery prevailed for many centuries throughout the extent of *Christendom*: and their night also is fast approaching. The Almighty (who can educe good from evil, and causes *wind and storm to fulfil His word*) by the agency of an unprincipled and wicked nation, has nearly annihilated the monstrous system; and it is not perhaps at present too bold to affirm, that henceforward the *European* community will assert with effect its claim upon the services of every individual, who enjoys its protection.

Still less would I be supposed, in enforcing the necessity of more religious warmth, to recommend or countenance the excesses of zeal. Remembering that every virtue has its limits, and that the rock of *Scylla* demanded at least as much of the mariner's

riner's caution as the whirlpool of *Charybdis*,
 let us so moderate and qualify the tempera-
 ture of our devotion, that it rise not to the
 flaming degree of relentless intolerance*.
 Enough of blood has already flowed to the
Moloch of persecution: it is time that his
 dungeons should be destroyed, and his fires
 extinguished. Let us obey Him, who has
 declared *He will have mercy, and not sacrifice*;
 and from not one or two, but a thousand
 instances in history, which show us men
 (much wiser, probably, and better than our-
 selves) adopting and maintaining, sometimes
 even with their lives, opinions now univer-
 sally exploded as erroneous, let us infer the
 possibility of our being likewise in error.
 Having so long contended against the infai-
 libility of the *Romish* Hierarchy, let us avoid
 the inconsistency, not to mention the pre-
 sumptuousness, of advancing a claim to the
 same super-human attribute. Let us re-
 collect that general councils and convoca-
 tions, however upright or ingenious, are
 alike composed of men; and that creeds, and

* See Note (Z).

canons,

canons and articles, however excellent, are still only of human fabrication. Embracing therefore those of our own church, as in our judgment most conformable to Scripture, let us neither call down fire from heaven, nor kindle it upon earth, for the punishment of those who judge differently. Let us not exhibit our mistaken godliness, at the expence of our humanity; nor erect an altar to faith, upon the ruins of the temple of charity.

One word more, before I conclude. From the *furious raging of the heathen**, by which we are now at last engaged in a contest, not only for our national constitution but (as it would seem) for the interests of Christianity and of mankind, it has been inferred by many of the clergy that at present certainly, if at any period, *he that hath no sword should sell his garment, and buy one*. Our constitution indeed, though, we trust, commensurate with time, with time must pass away; that day, which shall rend the sun from his sphere, will mock the vaunted

* See Note (AA).

perpetuity of all sublunary establishments: but, in the cause of our religion, it was imagined that no one would be disposed, or would be privileged, to remain an inactive spectator of the common danger. We have been enjoined however (and, as I think, properly enjoined) by our ecclesiastical superiors, to forbear engaging personally in this tremendous warfare, till increased danger render the personal services of every one indispensable*. The spiritual weapons then, belonging to our profession, it is more especially incumbent upon us to wield with constancy and vigour: if we are not allowed to brandish *Michael's* sword, yet the spear of *Ithuriel* is placed in our hands; and we must use it, that "no falsehood may endure." *Let us stand therefore, having our loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness, and our feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith we shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And let us take the helmet of salva-*

* See Note (BB).²

tion,

tion, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God. Under this panoply we may storm heaven by prayer, and with pious violence force down its blessings upon us. We shall thus at least do all that we are permitted, perhaps all that we ought to be permitted, to do: and if, for some mysterious but unquestionably-wise purpose of Providence, we be indeed ordained in our turn to *drink at the hand of the LORD the cup of His fury, to drink the dregs of the cup of trembling, and to wring them out,* we shall possess the consciousness of having contributed our most zealous endeavours to avert the ruin of our country—a consciousness which, sustaining and consoling us amidst our sufferings, will of itself be our *exceeding great reward.*

Yet necessarily ineffectual must those endeavours prove, unless we constantly add to them our fervent prayers that GOD would enable and strengthen both us, and all that serve Him in the gospel of His Son, to perform our duty with faithfulness: *for we are not sufficient of ourselves to think any thing, as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of GOD.*

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For that therefore, which we ought every one of us at all times to implore, let us at present jointly address Him, in the comprehensive and expressive words of our public service*:

Almighty and everlasting GOD, by whose Spirit the whole body of the church is governed and sanctified, receive our supplications and prayers, which we offer before thee for all estates of men in thy holy church; that every member of the same, in his vocation and ministry, may truly and godly serve Thee, through our Lord and Saviour JESUS CHRIST†, Amen.

* See note (CC).

† See Note (DD).

NOTES AND ILLUSTRATIONS.

(A) Ασφαλεστέρον ἢ καὶ ἀκινδυνότερον, τὸ περιμένειν τὴν ἐκβασιν τῆς προφητείας ἢ τὸ κατασοχάζεσθαι καὶ καταμανθάνεσθαι. (IREN. V. 30.)

(B) "The folly of interpreters has been, to foretel times and things by this prophecy (the Apocalypse) as if GOD designed to make them prophets. By this rashness they have not only exposed themselves, but brought the prophecy also into contempt. The design of GOD was much otherwise. He gave this, and the prophecies of the Old Testament, not to gratify men's curiosities, by enabling them to foreknow things: but that, after they were fulfilled, they might be interpreted by the event; and His own providence, not the interpreter's, be then manifested thereby to the world." (SIR ISAAC NEWTON ON *Apoc.* I. 251.)

"Ἰδίας ἐπιλυσεως (2 *Pet.* i. 20.) translated in our version, of *private interpretation*, means that no prophecy interprets itself; that every prophecy is interpreted by the event. This notion gives the right meaning of ἰδίας, and agrees with the context."

(COOKE ON 2 *Pet.* i. 19.)

(C) Διαλεκτὸν μέντοι καὶ γλώσσαν οὐκ ἀκριβῶς ἐλληνίζουσιν αὐτὲς βλέπω, ἀλλ' ἰδιωμασι μὲν βαρβαρικοῖς χρωμένον, καὶ πᾶς καὶ σολοικίζοντα. (DION. ALEX. ap. EUSEB. H. E. vii. 25.)

(D) *Calvin* was commended by *SCALIGER*, for not writing upon it. *Dr. SOUTH* has asserted, that “it either finds a man mad, or makes him so.” (Vol. II. Serm. ii.) *WHITBY* durst not adventure to comment upon it, “for want of sufficient reading and judgment, to discern the intendment of the prophecies contained in it.” (Pref. to *Treatise on Millen.*) *VOLTAIRE* affirms, that *Sir Isaac Newton* wrote upon it, to console mankind for his great superiority over them in other respects. *LUTHER* went so far, as to reject it; and “the early Christians (says *HURD*, Serm. viii.) saw so little in it, that they were led by degrees to neglect the study of it.”

Some parts of it, however (particularly xi. 2, 3. xii. 6. 14. xiii. 5. &c., compared with *Dan.* vii. 25. xii. 7.) are so strikingly explicit, as almost to deserve the character, given by *JOSEPHUS* to *Daniel*, of perspicuity: Οὐ γὰρ τὰ μελλοντα μόνον προφητευῶν διτελεῖ, καὶ θάπερ καὶ οἱ ἄλλοι προφηταί, ἀλλὰ καὶ καιρὸν ὀρίζεν, εἰς ὃν τὰντα ἀποβήσεται. (*Antiq.* X. xi. 7.) E. g. The inference from *six hundred, threescore and six* (xiii. 18.) is exceedingly strong; for to this number several different names of the Pope, interpreted according to the arithmetical notation of their respective languages, amount. Thus the letters of מנמנ (meaning the *Roman Beast*, or *Roman kingdom*) in *Hebrew*,
and

and of *Λατῖνος* (as the *Greeks* and other orientalists called the people of the western church, or church of *Rome*, after the division of the empire, IREN. v. 30.) in *Greek* numeration, are equivalent to 666. So likewise are the *Roman* numerals, in his *Latin* titles of VICarIVs generaLIs DeI In terrIs, and VICarIVs FILII DeI.

It seems, indeed, that this kind of argument may be carried to a fanciful degree. Thus the family name of the late Pope, in *Greek* (Βραχῆ) amounts to 333; and therefore the Pontiff and his nephew jointly complete the sum! LVDovICVs also contains, accurately, the same ill-omened number! "The Beast (says a *French* writer) is the constitution: the war is the present persecution of the Reformed; which began March 1730, and will end September 1733. This is included in the name LVDovICVs, the numeral letters of which amount to 666: the rest of the king's title (DeCIMVs qVIntVs, franCIæ et naVarræ reX) makes exactly 1733," &c. (*Calend. myst. fondé sur l'Apocal. et sur Esaie.*)

"And perhaps in the name of *Mahomet* (the celebrated impostor and corrupter of the patriarchal and evangelical religion in the eastern world by Islamism, as the Pope in the western by Romanism) we may trace the number 666; incorrectly applied to the Papacy, for it is a man's number; whereas *Λατῖνος* is the name of a people, and not *Latin* but *Greek*! The name *Mahmud*, מַחְמֻד (as fully written, *Lament. i. 11.*) signifying εὐδοξος, celebrated, by a usual (?) re-

duplication of the second letter π , extending the word to three syllables, and substituting their numerical values, $\square$ final (!) = 600, π = 8, π = 8, π medial = 40, ι = 6, γ = 4, &c. &c. (Inspector, by Prof. HALEs, *Dublin*.)

Again—RABAUT DE ST. ETIENNE, in his History of the *French* Revolution, I. p. 28. enumerates the opponents it had to encounter: 1. Nobles. 2. Military. 3. Privileged persons, exempt from certain imposts. 4. Priests. 5. Monastic orders. 6. Farmers-general. 7. The Law. These formed *la haute nation*.

The *French* nobility was itself also subdivided into seven classes: 1. The higher order of Clergy. 2. *Les grands Seigneurs*. 3. *Présentés Connus*. 4. *Présentés Inconnus*. 5. *Non-Présentés*. 6. *Anoblis*. 7. *Gens moins que rien*, i. e. all the new nobility.

N. B. This paragraph is added, with reference to the *ονομασία ανθρωπων χιλιαδες επτα* (*Rev. xi. 13.*) inadequately rendered in our translation, of *men seven thousand*. Here, PRIESTLEY observes, “an earthquake may signify a great convulsion and revolution in states; and, as the papal dominions were divided into ten parts, one of which (and one of the principal of them) was *France*, it is properly called a *tenth part of the city*, or of the mystical *Babylon*. And if by *names of men* we understand their titles, such as those of the nobility and other hereditary distinctions, all of which are now abolished, the accomplishment of the prediction will appear to be wonderfully exact.” (*Fast-Serm.* 1794.)

To this note (which some will consider as partially, and others as wholly whimsical) may be added, perhaps without impropriety, the recent anagram upon the new Bishop of *Rome* (CHIARAMONTE) *Roma, china te*—as implying the submission of that see, under his pontificate.

(E) “Even fire is pretended to *come down from heaven* (*Rev.* xiii. 13.) as in the case of *St. Anthony’s* fire, and other instances cited by BRIGHTMAN and other writers on the Revelation; and in solemn excommunications, which are called the thunders of the church, and are performed with the ceremony of casting down burning torches from on high, as symbols and emblems of *fire from heaven*.” Vid. *Pol. Synops.* in loc. (NEWT. *Diff. on Proph.* II. 293.)

Of *Paul IV.* Father PAUL says “*Solito di non parlar mai con gli ambasciadori, se non intonandogli nelle orecchie che egli era sopra tutti gli principi; che non voleva, che alcuno d’essi domesticasse seco; che poteva mutar i regni; che era successor di chi hà deposto rè et imperadori, &c. &c. &c.*” (*Ist. del. concil. Trident. V.*) “*Alle leggi dell’ inquisitione soggiacciono i rè medesimi; e speffe volte, con sommo ludibrio de loro scettri, bisogna che ne pruovino essi ancora la severità del castigo.*” (BENTIVOGL. *Guerra di Fiand.* p. 83.)

Pius V. deposed Queen *Elizabeth*, by a Bull, published in 1576: which, as Bishop JEWELL remarked to his congregation, “tore the crown from her head. It discharged all her natural subjects from all due obedience. It armed one side of them against another.

It emboldened them to burn, to spoil, to rob, to kill, to cut one another's throats; like *Pandora's* box sent to *Epimetheus*, full of hurtful and unwholesome evils."

Paul V. (who was advanced to the papal dignity, in preference to two learned antagonists, *Bellarmino* and *Baronius*) expressly approved the doctrine of *Suarez* the Jesuit, in defence of "The murder of kings." The same Pontiff, speaking of *Fulgentio* (the friend and biographer of Father *Paul*) observed, "He has indeed some good sermons, but bad ones withal: he stands too much upon Scripture; which is a book, that if any man will keep close to, he will quite ruin the Catholic Faith!" (F. PAUL's *Lett.* xxvi.)

(F) The following masterly delineation of the primitive Christian priesthood occurs in an excellent Sermon, preached at the anniversary meeting of the *Pembrokeshire* Clergy, by the Rev. CHARLES SYMONS.

"This priesthood resembled no other, with which the world was acquainted. Unlike the pagan or the *Jewish*, it possessed nothing to allure the vulgar glance. Supported by no revenues, acknowledged by no laws, unornamented with the colours of human eloquence and learning, it was poor, and abased, and plain; approving its ministry *by patience, by afflictions, by its necessities, by its distresses*. Under this veil, however, it concealed more beauty and splendour, than had ever yet captivated or dazzled mankind. It was demonstrated to be the servant of the Most High,

by

by pureness and by the Holy Ghost. It was awful with holiness, and magnificent with power; the human instrument of the manifested God! &c. &c."

The whole discourse indeed (to adapt to it his own words, upon another occasion) exhibits the "rare and bright union of piety, taste, and erudition."

(G) BONIFACE VIII. speaking of *Lewis IX.*, previously to his canonization, says "His miracles have been examined and re-examined; and have produced as many writings, *quantum unus asinus posset portare!*"

(H) In *Macclesfield Church* is a brass plate on the wall, with this pleasing notification; "The pardon for saying of five *Pater-Nosters*, and five *Aves*, and a Creed is—twenty-six thousand years, and twenty-six days of pardon!" (PENNANT.)

(I) *Opposing and exalting himself above all that is called GOD, or that is worshipped; so that he, as GOD, sitteth in the temple of GOD, shewing himself that he is GOD.* (2 *Thess.* ii. 4.) Compare *Dan.* vii. 25, and xi. 36. and consider, whether the Pope doth not "make himself equal, and even superior to GOD—in sitting upon the high altar in *St. Peter's church* at his inauguration, and making the Table of the LORD his footstool, and in that posture receiving the adoration of his cardinals!"—"in asserting his decrees to be of the same, or greater authority than the word of GOD; and commanding them to be received under the penalty of the same, or greater damnation!"—"in assuming, or approving such titles and maxims (found even

even in public decretals, and acts of councils!) as *Dominus Deus noster Pápa!—Alter Deus in terra!—Rex Regum, Dominus Dominorum!—Papa facit quicquid libet, etiam illicita, et est plusquam Deus!* &c. &c. (NEWT.)

For a further account of his usurpations and impieties, see JEWELL's Apolog. and BARROW on the *Pope's Supremacy*, Introd.

(K) This is strikingly exemplified in the instance of the *Pantheon*, or temple of all the Gods, which is now a church, dedicated to the Virgin and all the Martyrs!

(L) MONTESQUIEU, speaking of the ignorance encouraged by the Greek clergy, says “ *Quand je pense à l'ignorance profonde dans laquelle le clergé Grec plongeait les laïcs, je ne puis m'empêcher de le comparer à ces Scythes, dont parle HERODOTE (IV.) qui crevoient les yeux à leurs esclaves, afin que rien ne pût les distraire, et les empêcher de battre leur lait.* (Grand. et Decad. des Romains, xxii.)

(M) *Nondum ille (Papa) spero, oblitus est multa esse Romæ meretricum millia; et se ex illis in singulos annos, vestigalis nomine, colligere ad triginta millia ducatorum. Oblivisci non potest, se Romæ lenocinium publicè exercere, et de fœdissimâ mercede fœdè ac nequiter delicari.—Meretrices enim ibi jam sedent, non ut olim (Gen. xxviii.) extra civitatem obnupto et obvoluto capite, sed in palatiis habitant; per foram vagantur apertâ fronte, quasi id non tantùm liceat, sed etiam laudi esse debeat.—*

Tantus

Tantus hodie est luxus, non tantum in clericis et sacerdotibus, sed etiam in praelatis et episcopis, ut horribile sit auditu, &c." (JUELL. Apolog., where also many instances are given.)

Sir EDWIN SANDYS in his *Europæ Speculum*, describing the various contrarieties of the state and church of *Rome*, exclaims—"What pomp, what riot, to that of their cardinals?—what severity of life comparable to that of their heremits and capuchins? Who wealthier than their prelates?—who poorer, by vow and profession, than their mendicants? On the one side of the street, a cloister of virgins: on the other, a sty of courtesans, with public toleration. This day all in masks, with all looseness and foolery: to-morrow all in processions, whipping themselves till the blood follow. On one door an excommunication, throwing to hell all transgressors: on another, a jubilee or full discharge from all transgressions," &c.

Nay, the Homilies say—"The church of *Rome* hath been, for the space of nine hundred years and odd, so far wide from the nature of the true church, that nothing can be more!" &c. (p. 283. edit. 1766.)

(N) "*Cleri Anglicani causam quod attinet, facile mecum senties esse illam à sacerdotum Pontificiorum causâ longè diversam.—Veruntamen, si quis nostrum in rerum sacrarum administratione aliquid profanum vel in doctrinâ hæreticum admiserit; si quis eo solum animo rem ecclesiasticam capefferit, ut ambitioni, avaritiæ, luxuriæ inserviat, et paræciæ curam gerat planè nullam, nisi quæ in decimis severius exigendis conspicitur, si quis demum,*"

demon," &c. (BURTON. Hoph. et Phin. præf. ii. pp. 20—22.)

(O) SECKER's *Charge to the Diocese of Oxford*, 1738.

(P) For the origin of atheists, consult BENTLEY on *Freethinking* (I. xv.); and likewise, for their tenets: "That the soul is material and mortal, Christianity an imposture, the Scripture a forgery, the worship of GOD superstition, hell a fable and heaven a dream, our life without providence, and our death without hope, like that of asses and dogs—are parts of the glorious gospel of atheists." (I. iv.)

Ἡδη γὰρ μοι σκοτος ἀγνοίας ἀπαύλα, καὶ ἀπάτη με-
λαινά, καὶ ἀπειρος πλάνη, καὶ ἀτελής φαντασία, καὶ
ἀκατάληπτος ἀγνοία. Ταῦτα τοίνυν διεξηλθόν, βελομενος
δειξάι τὴν ἐν τοῖς δογμασιν ὕσαν αὐτῶν ἐναντιότητα, καὶ
ὡς εἰς ἀπείρον αὐτοῖς, καὶ ἀορίστον προεῖσιν ἢ ζήτησις τῶν
πραγμάτων, καὶ τὸ τέλος αὐτῶν ἀτεκμαρτον καὶ ἀχρησ-
τον, ἐργῶ μὴδενὶ προδηλῶ καὶ λογῶ σαφεὶ βεβαιημενον.
(HERM. Διασυρμ.)

For their numbers see PRIESTLEY, who observes (*Fast-Serm.*) that, "when he visited *France* in 1774, all her philosophers and men of letters were absolute infidels: and that he was represented by one of them, in a mixed strain of censure and compliment, as the only man of talent he had met, who had any faith in the Scriptures!"

Nay "*Voltaire* himself, who was then living, was considered by them as a weak-minded man; because, though an unbeliever in revelation,

revelation, he believed in a God!" (p. 23.) This appears to confute what has been so often remarked, though perhaps nowhere more forcibly than in the subjoined quotation from MAXIMUS TYRIUS, upon the infrequency of genuine atheists: Εἰ δὲ ἐξεγενοῖτο ἐν τῷ ξυμπαντί αἰωνί δυο πᾶ και τρεῖς ἀθεόν και ταπεινόν και ἀναισθητὸς γένος, και πεπλανημένον μὲν τοῖς ὀφθαλμοῖς, ἐξηπαλῆμενον δὲ ταῖς ἀκοαῖς, ἐκτέλμημενον δὲ τὴν ψυχὴν ἀλογόν και ἀγοῖόν και ἀκαρπόν, ὥς ἀθύμος λεων, ὥς βῆς ἀκερὸς, ὥς ὄρνις ἀπτερός—και παρὰ ταῦτα ὅμως τὰ γένετα πρὸς τὸ θεῖον. Ἰσασι γὰρ ἔχοντες, και λεγέσθιν ἀκούντες. (Διαλεξ. α.)

(Q) And yet these hurried services, this "grating of lean and flashy songs," is technically styled *DOING THE DUTY OF A PARISH!* But do we sufficiently weigh the apostle's affirmation—*wo is unto me, if I preach not the gospel* (1 Cor. ix. 16.) which he elsewhere, in the same epistle (i. 23. ii. 2.) calls *preaching CHRIST crucified?* St. Paul did not content himself with recommending a few fashionable principles of morality; nor, again, did he waste his powers in the strenuous idleness of defending, *en metaphysicien*, some mysterious topic of controversy. "No fundamental doctrines did he obscure by partial suppression, or refine away by sophistical interpretation: he taught them, as he received them from above. He scorned to temporize, when his commission was clear, and the object of high and indubitable importance," &c. (WHITE'S Bampton. Lect. I. 18.) The unvarying theme of all his addresses and letters was CHRIST.

But

But we slumber in the garden, while *the Son of Man* is betrayed. (Matt. xxvi. 45.)

(R) RENNEL's *Anniv. Serm. before the Sons of the Clergy*, 1796. p. xxvi.

(S) The following beautiful illustration of lukewarmness occurs in JEREMY TAYLOR: "The river that runs slow, and creeps by the banks, and begs leave of every turf to let it pass, is drawn into little hollownesses, and spends itself in smaller portions, and dies with diversion; but when it runs with vigourousness and a full stream, and beats down every obstacle, making it even as its own brow, it stays not to be tempted by little avocations, and to creep into holes, but runs into the sea through full and useful channels: so is a man's prayer, if it moves upon the feet of an abated appetite; it wanders into the society of every trifling accident, and stays at the corners of the fancy, and talks with every object it meets, and cannot arrive at heaven," &c. (*Serm. xiv.*)

(T) Do we not indeed daily read our shame in the advertisement of livings, emphatically stated to be SITUATE IN A FINE SPORTING COUNTRY? "*Exactissime canum victorias solertiamque computant; nec ingeniosior ad parendum equus, quam illi ad prædicandum disertii* (not the gospel, but) *illud nemus generosissimas aves alere, hujus campi extenso spatio inæquales lepores fatigari!*" (BARCLAY. *Euphorm. 1.*) Alas! *gaudet equis canibusque* is but an indifferent motto, to be substituted

stituted for the *sub hoc signo vinces*, on the Christian's armorial bearing. "He, that is appointed to minister in holy things, must not suffer secular affairs and fordid arts to eat up great portions of his employment: it was a great idleness in *Theophylact*, the Patriarch of C. P. to spend his time in his stable of horses, when he should have been in his study, or in the pulpit, or saying his holy offices." (TAYLOR'S *Holy Living*, I. i. 9.) Of this Prelate it is related (FLEURY, *Hist. Eccles.* lv.) that "he had in his stables above two thousand horses, which he fed with pignuts, pistachios, dates, dried grapes, and figs steeped in the most exquisite wines, to all which he added the richest perfumes. One Holy-Thursfday, as he was celebrating high-mass, his groom brought him the joyful news, that one of his favourite mares (*Phorbante*) had foaled, upon which he threw down the liturgy, left the church, and ran in raptures to the stable; where having expressed his joy at that grand event, he returned to the altar to finish the divine service, which he had left interrupted during his absence!"

How different the character of Dr. *Isaac Barrow*, as delineated by Dr. MAPLETOFT in his epitaph!—"Opes, honores, et universæ vitæ ambitum, ad majora natus, non contempsit sed reliquit sæculo."

(U) The love of fame—whether it be courted from hunting foxes, or preferment, or literary celebrity; whether it generate "erudition in the portico, skill in the lycæum, eloquence in the senate, or victory in the field"; is radically the same principle, and "by
the

the judgment of the word of GOD, in its nature, essentially corrupt :—false, because it exalts that, which ought to be abased ; and criminal, because it encroaches on the divine prerogative :—of base extraction and ungenerous qualities, springing from selfishness, and vanity, and low ambition : by these it subsists, and thrives, and acts ; and envy, and jealousy, and detraction, and hatred, and variance are its too faithful and natural associates.—But the cultivation of the desire of *that honour, which cometh from GOD*, the Christian finds the most effectual means of bringing his mind into a proper temper, in what regards the love of human approbation.” &c. (WILBERFORCE’S *Pract. View*, iv. 3.)

(X) I omit the grosser vices of drunkenness, &c. though SECKER thought it neither unworthy of him, nor unnecessary, to recommend a conscientious abstinence “ not only *from all evil*, but also *from all appearance of it*. (1 *Thess.* v. 22.) Such a one, for instance, far from ever offending against temperance, will be noted for it ; and think the imputation of being *mighty to drink wine* (*Isai.* v. 22.) almost as infamous, as that of being overcome by it.” (*First Charge to the Clergy of Oxford*.) And, in his *Second Charge to the Clergy of Canterbury*—“ Skill in the science of eating (*HIERON. ad Nepotian.* ix.) and the perfection of liquors—in short, every approach to luxurious gratification is strangely out of place in one, who hath devoted himself to *endure hardness, as a good soldier of JESUS CHRIST*.” (2 *Tim.* ii. 3.)

See

See likewise PALEY's valuable tract, entitled *Advice to the Young Clergy of the Diocese of Carlisle*, 1781. p. 25, &c.

(Y) This sect (according to JORTIN) "seem to have been but one remove from those, who by the Roman laws were *ad agnatos et gentiles deducendi*."

I am aware, however, that many writers have derived the principles of these contemplative Christian recluses from the source of *Platonic* philosophy.

(Z) Miserable infatuation!--to proclaim *on earth* WAR, and ILL-WILL towards men (*Luke ii. 14.*) in the propagation of a doctrine which is *pure, peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy!* (*James iii. 17.*)—to proceed "upon the plan of that barbarous policy, which composes the troubles of a turbulent land by the extermination of its inhabitants"! (WILBERF.)—to think of "engraving truth upon the heart with the point of the spear, and of illuminating the understanding with flaming faggots!" (HALE.)—to "employ force instead of argument, impose silence where we cannot convince, and propagate our opinions by the sword!" (JUN.)

"I am never angry with any man for his opinions, whether he be a *Jew, Turk*, or idolater: he may speak his mind freely to me, without fear of offending. I should even be glad to hear what he hath to say, provided he saith it in an ingenuous candid
S manner.

manner. Whoever digs in the mine of truth, I look on as my fellow-labourer." (MIN. PHILOS.)

"Justinien, qui détruisit ces sectes par l'épée ou par ses loix, et qui les obligeant à se révolter s'obligea à les exterminer, rendit incultes plusieurs provinces. Il crut avoir augmenté le nombre des fidèles; il n'avoit fait que diminuer celui des hommes." (MONTESQ. 255.)

"If the sword turns preacher, and dictates propositions by empire instead of arguments, and engraves them in men's hearts with a poniard—that it shall be death to believe, what I innocently and ignorantly am persuaded of—it must needs be unsafe to *try the spirits*, to *try all things*, to make inquiry; and yet, without this liberty, no man can justify himself before God or man, nor confidently say that his religion is best," &c. (TAYL. xiv.)

"*Sæviant, qui nesciunt cum quo labore verum inveniantur, et quam difficile caveantur errores; quàm rarum et arduum sit carnalia phantasmata piæ mentis serenitate superare; cum quantâ difficultate sanetur oculus interioris hominis, ut possit intueri Solem suum; quibus suspiriis et gemitibus fiat, ut ex quantulâcumque parte possit intelligi Deus,*" &c. (AUG. contr. Epist. Manich.)

"There is a great deal of weight in that distich of PRUDENTIUS,

Sic mores produnt animum, et (mihi credite) semper

Junctus cum falso est dogmate cædis amor.

Let the *Turk* spread his Alcoran by the sword; but let Christianity expand herself still by a passive fortitude, wherein she always gloried." (HOWELL's *Fam. Lett.* IV. xxix.)

Even

Even controversy, as it is usually managed, though by no means necessarily allied to persecution, is far from what it ought to be. Instead of what has been not ill denominated AGREEING TO DIFFER, and *speaking the truth in love* (*Eph. iv. 15.*) *in meekness instructing those, that oppose themselves* (*2 Tim. ii. 25.*) is it not often “a kind of illiberal scolding and fighting, a mutual buffeting of reputations; sometimes, a mere effusion of personal enmity; sometimes a wretched disingenuous trial of skill, a literary prize-fighting exhibited to certain spectators, who afford it their attention: the prize, perhaps, a few followers, or a little applause; or possibly the patronage of some powerful bigots, who have rewards to bestow”? (*HEY'S Lect. II. ii. 11.*)

(AA) May I be excused for one semi-political note upon our powerful adversary?

MONTESQUIEU, speaking of the ancient Romans, observes: “*Leur coutume étant de parler toujours en maîtres, les ambassadeurs qu'ils envoyaient chez les peuples qui n'avoient point encore senti leur puissance, étoient sûrement maltraités; ce qui étoit un prétexte sûr pour faire une nouvelle guerre.*” *

“*Comme ils ne faisoient jamais la paix de bonne foi; et que, dans le dessein d'envahir tout, leurs traités n'étoient proprement que de suspensions de guerre; ils y mettoient des conditions, qui commençoient toujours la ruine de l'état qui les acceptoit. Ils faisoient sortir les garnisons des places fortes, ou bernoient le nombre des troupes de terre, ou se faisoient livrer les chevaux ou les éléphants;*

et, si ce peuple étoit puissant sur la mer, ils l'obligeoient de brûler ses vaisseaux, &c. Après avoir détruit les

armées d'un prince, ils ruïnoient ses finances par des taxes excessives ou un tribut, sous prétexte de lui faire payer les frais de la guerre : nouveau genre de tyrannie, qui le forçoit d'opprimer ses sujets, et de perdre leur amour."†

"Ils n'accordoient point de paix à un ennemi, qui ne contint une alliance; c'est-à-dire, qu'ils ne soumettoient point de peuple, qui ne leur servît à en abaisser d'autres,"‡ &c.

"Les magistrats et les gouverneurs vendoient aux rois leurs injustices;—on n'avoit pas même cette justice des brigands, qui portent une certaine probité dans l'exercice du crime,"§ &c. (Grand. &c.)

The names of JOSEPH BONAPARTE and BERNADOTTE*, of CAMPO FORMIO and RASTADT†, of SWISSERLAND‡, and TALLEYRAND DE PERIGORD§, sufficiently justify the parallelism implied in the above quotation.

With respect to their religion,—“ I mean not, in the least degree, to vilify or calumniate our infatuated neighbours. But it is notorious to the whole world that, for a course of many years, they have been sacrificing Christianity to a false and impious philosophy; and at length have in form, by a national act, not only apostatized from CHRIST, but also by open denial renounced the belief of a Supreme Being.” (PECKARD'S *Fast-Serm.* 1795.)

Αὐταὶ αἱ τὰ Θεομαχίᾳ φωναὶ—ἐπὶ κακίας ἰσχυρὴ μεγαλυνόμεναι, καὶ τὰς πρὸς τὰ ὕψις τοῖς ἀγγέλοις παραδοθείσας

ραδοθεισας των εθνων οροθεσις διαρπασαι και συγχαν
 απειληντος, προνομευσειν τε την οικημενην, και παν το των
 ανθρωπων γένος διεκσεισειν, και μετασσειν της προτερον
 ευταξιας απαυθαδιαζομενκ. (EUSEB. D. E. iv. 9.)

This national act however, it should be added in justice to an odious name, was rescinded by *Robespierre*; who (as some one observed, upon the occasion) "gave the Deity a certificate of His existence, and restored to the human soul its patent of immortality!"

(BB) "CHRIST, by reprovng St. *Peter* drawing his sword even in the cause of CHRIST, for His sacred and yet injured person, διδασκει μη χρησθαι μαχαира, και τον Θεον δοκει τις εκδικειν (faith THEOPHYLACT) teaches us not to use the sword, though in the cause of God, or for God Himself; because He will secure His own interest, only let Him be served, as Himself is pleased to command. And it is like *Moses'* passion; it throws the tables of the law out of our hands, and breaks them in pieces, out of indignation to see them broken." (TAYL. xiv.)

(CC) SECKER's *first* Oxford *Charge*.

(DD) *Second Coll. for* Good-Friday.

ST. PETER.

A SERMON,

PREACHED BEFORE THE UNIVERSITY OF

CAMBRIDGE,

MAY 4, 1800.

*Crede quod est, quod vis, ac desine tuta vereri;
Deque fide certâ fit tibi certa fides.*

OVID.

ST. PETER

A SERMON

PREACHED AT THE UNIVERSITY OF

CAMBRIDGE

MAY 4 1800

AS
A TESTIMONY OF RESPECT
FOR HONOURABLE AND SUCCESSFUL EXERTION,
IN DEFENCE OF
CHRISTIANITY AND THE BIBLE,
AGAINST
THE ATTACKS OF
LEARNED AND VULGAR INFIDELITY,
THE FOLLOWING DISCOURSE,
IS INSCRIBED
TO
THE RIGHT REVEREND
RICHARD WATSON, D.D.
LORD BISHOP OF LLANDAFF.

AS

A TESTIMONY OF RESPECT

FOR HER MAJESTY AND ROYAL HIGHNESS

IN PRESENCE OF

CHRISTIANITY AND THE BIBLE

AGAINST



LEARNED AND REVEREND

THE FOLLOWING DISCOURSE

BY

AND

THE REV. FATHER

RICHARD WILSON, D.D.

JOHN BISHOP OF LONDON.

ST. PETER.

LUKE VI. 14.

SIMON, *which He also named* PETER—

ON examining the early records of Christianity, our attention is strongly excited by the facts, which respect its propagation and establishment. The extraordinary birth and sudden growth of this new faith, with its quick subversion of heathenism (if viewed merely as the triumph of one religion over another, without regard to the unfavourable circumstances, under which it advanced to the attack) afford ample cause of astonishment—when we consider, how deeply religious prejudice is apt to entrench itself.

That such an effect should have been produced by any agents—however endowed by nature, accomplished by education, or patronized

tronized by authority—is indeed an event most wonderful; and we may explore the annals of antiquity in vain, for a similar example of a revolution at once so rapid, so beneficial, and so complete. The influence of the *Mosaic* dispensation was confined to the people, to whom it was originally delivered: in *Jewry* alone was God known, *His name was great only in Israel*. If this were the fortune of a doctrine, communicated by immediate revelation from the Deity Himself *, it was not to be expected, that the disputable dogmas of human philosophy should be accompanied with better success: and, accordingly, we learn from classic history, that—enforced as they were by argument, adorned with all the fascinations of eloquence and poetry, and recommended in many instances by the eminent virtue of their teachers—they still in every instance failed of introducing, even locally, any great or permanent change. After the theology of *Judaea*, and the ethics of *Greece*, the impure tenets of *Mohammed* may

* See Note (A) at the end of the Sermon.

scarcely

scarcely be mentioned : yet even these, notwithstanding the sensual indulgencies, which they permitted in this life and promised in the next, were indebted for their prevalence to the sword ; and have never been able to extend their empire, in any considerable degree, beyond the limits, which bounded the conquests of their propagators. Whereas Christianity, within a very short period from its promulgation, unaided by intrigue, or rhetoric, or violence, nay opposed by them all, *grew mightily and prevailed. Its sound went into all the earth, and its words unto the ends of the world.*

The investigation of the circumstances, adverse to its reception, would imply too wide a deviation from the subject of the present discourse. Suffice it therefore to state—that the established superstition, against which its efforts were chiefly to be directed, was consecrated in the public mind by the remoteness and obscurity of its source, confirmed by the hallowed voice of oracles, defended by an incorporation with civil polity, and embraced with specious cordiality
by

by legislators, philosophers, and heroes—who, whatever might be their inward disgust, had uniformly concurred, for a long series of ages, in all the exterior forms of vulgar idolatry. But the most powerful champion of paganism was found in the breasts of its votaries; to whose natural corruption it was artfully adapted, by a train of gaudy and licentious ceremonies, gratifying at once *the lust of the eye*, and the depravity of the heart. For this combination of parade and profligacy, Christianity proposed to substitute a simple worship, and a rigorous code of morals; the one as unalluring from its plainness, as the other was apparently impracticable from its severity—a project (it will be allowed) sufficiently arduous, to demand the co-operation of every possible advantage for its achievement; and, with every possible advantage, of most uncertain issue.

What then must be our surprise, when we reflect upon the persons and means actually employed for that purpose! A few illiterate natives of a despised and petty *Roman* province, at an era proverbially refined,

finéd, undertake to reform a *stubborn and rebellious generation*: and without conceding to interest, or entering into compromise with prejudice and passion, in spite of the scourge, the dungeon, and the cross, engage and triumph over the reluctant appetites and habits of mankind *!

Of this unparalleled success the primary cause was, undoubtedly, the over-ruling providence and authority of God†; who *chose the foolish, and weak, and base things of the world, to confound the wise, the mighty, and the proud—that no flesh should glory in His presence.* To determine the particular efficacy of St. PETER, one of these His subordinate and humble instruments, is the object of the following inquiry.

It has been proved, by a modern writer ‡ of distinguished candour and acuteness, that the first propagators of the Christian religion “must have passed their lives in labours, dangers, and sufferings, voluntarily under-

* See Note (B).

† See Note (C).

‡ See Note (D).

gone in attestation of the accounts which they delivered, and solely in consequence of their belief of them; and that they must also have submitted, from the same motive, to new rules of conduct." Hence he infers, that those accounts must have been confirmed by the evidence of miracles (as nothing indeed, less than miracles, could have substantiated the pretensions of their Leader to the character of MESSIAH) and therefore must necessarily be true—since, if they were false, by only withholding their testimony from a falsehood, the apostles might have escaped all their afflictions; and, by giving it, they consciously brought upon themselves enmity, persecution, and death.

This argument, it must be admitted, applies with nearly-equal force to the whole body. Previously however to the examination of those facts, in which St. PETER was principally or singly concerned, it seems proper to assert his claim to a portion of the credit accruing to Christianity, from the general difficulties and distresses attending its promulgation. If no narrative were extant, wherein

wherein he was specifically and frequently named; if he had possessed only the same means of conviction with his fellow-missionaries—some consequence, favourable to the doctrines which he maintained, might still be drawn from his having maintained them, in common with the others, through a life of hardship (which, by renouncing them, he might have avoided) and finally ratified them with his blood. But the gospels abound with passages, eminently distinguishing him from the rest of his brethren; from which more particular evidence, in behalf of those doctrines, may be easily and perhaps usefully deduced.

Till the coming of CHRIST, he appears to have pursued the employment of a fisherman, on the lake of *Gennesareth*. There, with a disposition extremely sanguine and, on the subject of the MESSIAH, actuated by all the grossness of *Jewish* prejudice, he was *looking for temporal redemption in Jerusalem*, when the Baptist announced the approach of the expected Deliverer. His introduction to JESUS, which immediately ensued,

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for

for he was one of His first converts, gave him an early opportunity of attending to His actions and discourses ; and such was the impression they produced, that when he was summoned to regular personal attendance, he *forsook all, and followed Him*.

Thenceforward, with few exceptions, he was generally His companion, and occasionally His host ; and, in return for his ardent and assiduous affection, received many signal marks of His especial regard. To detail the wonders exhibited daily before this disciple, for the purpose of estimating their concurrent effect upon his mind *, would be to transcribe the entire history of the Redeemer, whose whole ministry was a series of miracles. These miracles were neither the works of philosophy, operating with the powers of nature ; nor the tricks of successful imposture, deluding the simple and unsuspicious observer by physical paradox, or manual dexterity. Inimitable alike by craft and by science, they restored sight to the blind, soundness to the lame, hearing to the deaf,

* See Note (E).

purity to the leper, and life to the dead.

Upon two remarkable instances in particular, the resuscitation of *Jairus'* daughter and the transfiguration*, St. PETER with the sons of *Zebedee* was selected from the twelve, as a favoured witness of his Master's divinity. Relying upon that divinity, he also *came down out of the ship, and walked on the water*; and not long afterwards, upon strenuously declaring his full belief in Him, was pronounced *the rock*, on which the church should rest; and obtained a promise of the *keys of the kingdom of heaven*.

Hitherto his prejudices, in favour of a temporal and undying *Jewish MESSIAH*, had been supported by the constitutional buoyancy of his temper against the depression, that might otherwise have resulted from considering the meekness and low condition of Him, who assumed that character. They were now to sustain their first rude trial: for *from that time forth began JESUS to shew unto His disciples, how that He must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the*

* See Note (F).

elders, and chief-priests, and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day. Deeply affected by this prediction, announcing an event at once so fatal to his beloved Friend and to his own expectations, St. PETER with unseasonable zeal *began to rebuke Him, saying—"Be it far from Thee, LORD: this shall not be unto Thee ;"* upon which, he incurred himself a severe reproof. Yet notwithstanding this censure, and the warmth with which he soon after repeated his protestations of unalterable attachment, he continued subject to the same inveterate delusion; and his confidence in CHRIST would therefore naturally be weakened, with his hopes of secular distinction and authority. Already staggered by previous incidents, it must nearly have sunk under the scenes of the garden of *Gethsemane*. It seems, indeed, to have been chiefly from motives of personal affection, that he then rashly drew his sword in his Master's defence; and afterwards followed Him, though *afar off*, into the palace of the high-priest. There, while he anxiously awaited the decision of the tribunal,

lunal, his apprehensions for himself or for his LORD (expressed in the accent, and dialect of *Galilee*) excited the notice of the by-standers. Great spirits are usually attended with rapid vicissitudes of passion, which by turns usurp the dominion, and leave little room for thought or reflection. Hence he, who lately with so much fervour declared that he would never either be offended because of CHRIST, or deny Him, now hopeless of His acquittal and alarmed for his own safety, upon the mere interrogation of a female attendant, with equal fervour disclaimed His acquaintance. His recollection however, roused by a glance of tender reproach, was immediately succeeded by repentance; and the same moment witnessed his imprecations, and his tears.

That those tears flowed from remaining love, rather than from returning conviction, will appear highly probable, when we observe his subsequent conduct. With his sanguine temperament, he might still perhaps faintly hope, that CHRIST would *yet redeem Israel*: but by the circumstance of

the crucifixion, independent of its ignominy, and the peculiar curse attached to it by the *Jewish* law, this slender confidence must have been completely overthrown. It was reserved for the resurrection, to replace it upon a firmer basis, and in juster proportions than ever.

The argument arising out of this important event invincible as it is, when considered with regard to the disciples in general, receives additional authority from its connection with the apostle of this discourse. By him it was most minutely * examined, and most clearly ascertained ; and upon his full assurance of its truth was built that unshaken fortitude, with which he, who had once trembled before a maid-servant, thenceforward inflexibly asserted, even to martyrdom—before the *chief-priests, and elders, and council, and all the senate of the children of Israel*—the doctrine of CHRIST CRUCIFIED, AND RISEN AGAIN.

Perplexed by comparing the miracles and holiness of the MESSIAH, with His suffer-

* See Note (G).

ings and death; despairing of His resurrection, the prophecies relative to which he had wholly misunderstood; and dreading the rancour of his now-triumphant enemies, the *Jews*—he listened, in a state of mingled doubt and desire, to the first account (brought by *Mary Magdalen*) of “the disappearance of the body of the LORD:” and with an impetuosity, indicating jealousy rather than expectation of the fact, ran immediately with another disciple to the sepulchre, and *went into it*, for the purpose of ascertaining the accuracy of the report. That he returned unconvinced, whatever might be his reviving hope, seems deducible from what his companion *St. John* observes of himself, that he *saw and believed**. A fresh account, that “two angels had appeared, and informed the women of the resurrection,” carried him thither again; and, though he did not find them upon his arrival, it seems probable that his interview with CHRIST (who was *seen by him*, first of the apostles) took place, as he was returning from this second visit. Afterwards, during the

* See Note (H).

forty days previous to the ascension, in which the Saviour shewed Himself alive by *many infallible proofs*, St. PETER was re-admitted to his former favour, and received some particular tokens of His affection.

Now, with regard to the corporeal identity of CHRIST after His resurrection, it may be observed of all the apostles, that having lived so long and so familiarly with Him, having *heard*, having *seen with their eyes*, having *looked upon and with their hands handled the Word of life*, they could not be deceived upon this subject. He appeared frequently, and in full day to them: He mingled in their conversation, and permitted His materiality to be ascertained by contact. They saw Him separately, and together; in the garden, and on their journies; at *Jerusalem*, and in *Galilee*; in the calm of religious assemblies, and in the hurry of their secular employments.

Nor is it at all more likely, either from the character of the men or of the undertaking, that they could intend to deceive others: indeed their laborious and holy lives, and the cheerfulness and heroism
with

with which they encountered death, are of themselves a sufficient pledge to the contrary. Opinion, supported by the fervour too frequently consequent upon religious speculation, may occasionally have her martyrs: but he is neither an enthusiast, nor a knave, who dies in attestation of a fact. Here however again, in both these respects, whatever is alledged to preserve the whole body from the imputation of being either deceivers or dupes, applies with more-than-proportionate force to St. PETER. From his longer and more intimate intercourse with the Redeemer, he was still less liable to be imposed upon, than the rest of the apostles; and his peculiar temper and state of mind render it in the highest degree improbable, that he should either have concerted, or concurred in any project of imposing upon others. And yet, on the hypothesis of CHRIST's not having risen again (which must rest upon the palpably-absurd story of the *Roman* soldiers, that *His disciples had come by night, and stolen Him away while they slept*) we are under the necessity of believing as follows: viz.

I. That

I. That, notwithstanding the distinguished INTREPIDITY of this illustrious disciple, after an obstinate struggle between prejudice and evidence, he retracted his original confidence in the supposed MESSIAH, with obvious indications of fear and inconsistency; but on a sudden, by an unaccountable change of character, professing to resume his conviction, after an event naturally most irreconcilable with it, came forward to declare his belief in One dead, whom while living he in particular had disowned.

II. That he not only declared his belief in Him, but notwithstanding his singularly strong NATIONAL bias, and the striking CANDOUR and SIMPLICITY of his disposition, confederated likewise with several other men, of sound understanding and irreproachable reputation, to propagate the anti-judaical opinions of an Impostor; who, by false predictions and counterfeit miracles, had deluded them into the support of a heresy, exposing their characters to odium and their persons to danger, and had recently fallen a victim to the just severity of the laws.

III. That for this purpose, notwithstanding

ing his total DEFICIENCY in point of art and literature, he invented—in conjunction with these his accomplices, themselves wholly incompetent to such a contrivance—a systematic series of falsehoods; which have never to this day been betrayed by cowardice, discovered by accident, nor detected by investigation: and,

IV. That, in support of these falsehoods (liable moreover, as they were, to hourly disclosure—from the probable faithlessness of associates, the incalculable operation of chances, or the keen and active scrutiny of foes) notwithstanding his natural WORLDLINESS of spirit, he incurred not merely the risk, but the certain ruin of his ease, security, and temporal interests: and hopeless equally of present advantage, and of ultimate success, persisted through a life of continual labour, even *to the death of the cross*; without being moved either by threats or by promises, by the apprehension or by the infliction of torture, to swerve from the fatal contract, by which he had bound himself to concealment*.

* See Note (I).

Any

Any one of these propositions is, in itself, sufficiently improbable; taken collectively, they are incredible.

I have reserved some observations upon the argument derived from the prophecies, as influencing St. PETER's conduct, apart from that founded upon the miracles—in order to give a more distinct view of its peculiar efficacy.

That the predictions of the Old Testament referring to the MESSIAH were all, in St. PETER's later and more correct judgment, accurately fulfilled in CHRIST—we have his own assurance, stated in his second address to the *Jews* (*Acts* iii. 21—24.) and in his conversation with *Cornelius* (*Acts* x. 43.) and confirmed by his general remarks on prophecy, in his second epistle (i. 19—21.) But my present object confines me to those, which occur in the New. To spiritualize the expectations and sustain the faith of His followers, under their approaching trials, our Saviour indulged them with additional evidences of His divine mission; by foretelling several events
of

of which they would, in many instances, be permitted to witness the accomplishment. With a degree of circumstantiality, utterly excluding every inference, that can be founded on felicity of conjecture or doubtfulness of application, He described to them the nature and order of His impending agonies; the guilt of one of their body in betraying, of another in denying, and of all in forsaking Him*; His consignment to the *Roman* Procurator, and the indignities preceding His crucifixion; His resurrection, and ascension; the descent of the Comforter, and the extraordinary powers, with which they should afterwards be endowed. That these predictions were delivered previously to the occurrences, with which they so punctually agreed, we may safely admit upon the testimony of the sacred writers; when we consider, that their relation of them is generally accompanied with humiliating acknowledgments of their own weakness and misapprehension: St. PETER, in particular, is usually represented, as grossly mistaking the meaning of his LORD's plainest declarations. He would

* See Note (L).

likewise, naturally, be almost exclusively affected by those prophecies, which were fulfilled with such melancholy exactness in himself. Under this head too we must observe, that he alone engaged in the propagation of Christianity, with the distinct and assured view of a violent death. The apostles in general might reasonably anticipate persecution, as well from their Master's frequent predictions, as from His sad experience of the world's hostility. When the Leader had expired upon a cross, His followers could not hope wholly to escape suffering; and the early martyrdom of some of their fellow-labourers would further strengthen these expectations in the survivors. But St. PETER could not feel a doubt, upon the subject of his own fate. It had been expressly foretold by CHRIST; and we find him, in his second epistle, calmly referring to it, as a matter of the utmost certainty (i. 14, 15.)

Here then we rest. From the foregoing statement it appears, that a man of
sound

found mind and of unblemished reputation—
 who, from his early and familiar connection
 with the Saviour, had enjoyed peculiar op-
 portunities of observing His actions, behold-
 ing His miracles, and hearing His discourses ;
 and who, from the particularity of his
 opinions and disposition, would be led to
 examine them all with the strictest atten-
 tion—remained for a long time fully satis-
 fied of His divine mission : till his inveterate
 prejudices, in favour of a temporal and un-
 dying MESSIAH, received so violent a shock
 from the crucifixion, that his faith (which
 was closely united with those prepossessions)
 nearly, if not wholly, expired under it.
 Within the short period however of three
 days, his character, from a state of drooping
 and despondency, was raised to more than
 its original elevation—with a suddenness,
 which can only be accounted for, by sup-
 posing him convinced of the truth of the
 resurrection, in the fullest and most satis-
 factory manner: his confidence returned with
 augmented vigour, and remained thencefor-
 ward firm and inflexible. After the
 ascension, of which all the eleven were eye-
 witnesses,

witnesſes, we find him at the head of that ſmall number; renouncing every conſideration of pleaſure, intereſt, and perſonal ſafety; and voluntarily undertaking a life of fatigue and danger, in the promulgation of his opinions—undismayed, by the proſpect of want, anxiety, and imprifonment; or the aſſurance of a painful and ignominious death.

Without engaging in inquiries—relative to the direction of his travels, the precise period of his arrival at *Rome*, or the date, cauſe, and manner of his crucifixion*—it will be ſufficient to obſerve that, after a ſeries of inceſſant toils and perils encountered for upwards of thirty years, he at laſt ſuffered under *Nero*, in the perſecution conſequent upon the conflagration of that city.

At nearly the ſame time with the APOSTLE (as St. PETER is frequently ſtyled) OF THE CIRCUMCISION, and in the ſame cauſe, ſuffered his zealous colleague St. *Paul*, the APOSTLE OF THE GENTILES. But the divine flame of religion was not to be

* See Note (L).

extinguished

extinguished by the blood of its teachers: on the contrary, it was thereby made to burn with increasing ardour and brilliancy, and still continues to animate and enlighten the universe. After being exposed for nearly three centuries to imperial and pagan violence, Christianity has had to undergo for a much longer period the more dangerous, because secret, sapping of papal corruption; and, as if she were never to know for a moment that peace, of which she is so eminently the advocate, the wiles of the Papacy have been succeeded by the open attack of Philosophism and Infidelity. These may perhaps for a while retain their ground, but they must ultimately fall before her; for we have been assured by the Word of Truth that, however she may occasionally be assailed, she is built upon a rock*, *against which the gates of hell shall never prevail.*

Now to God, &c.

* See Note (M).

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NOTES.

(A) The object indeed of the *Mosaic* system (it has been often observed) was such, as not to demand an extensive propagation of its tenets. But this remark, while it vindicates the divine character of that dispensation, in no degree whatever affects the argument, respecting the inadequacy of human agents to accomplish any important religious change. Its teachers, we are told, *compassed sea and land, to make one proselyte.*

(B) Κακεινο δε πως ε μεσον εκπληξεως, το πλανης ανδρας και ιδιωτας, μητε λαλειν μητε ακειν πλεον της παλριε φωνης επισαμενς, μη μονον διανοηθηναι προελθειν επι την των παντων εθνων περιοδον, αλλα και προελθουσας κατορθωσαι το επιτηδευμα'—εκ ανιδρωτι, δια δε βασανων υπομονης και πασης αικιας και θανατε. (EUSEB. D. E. iii. 2.)

(C) Κηρυττειν δε αγροικας ανδρας εις παντας το τε Ιησϋ ονομα κ. τ. λ.—ταυτα εκ ετ' εγωγε κατ' ανθρωπον ειναι, μητι γε κατα ευτελεις και ιδιωτας, πολλε δει καλα πλανης και γοητας. (Id. *ib.* 7.)

(D) Dr. PALEY, in his *View of the Evidences of Christianity.*

(E)

(E) That they had due weight with him, we may conclude from his referring to them (*Acts* ii. 22.) where he speaks of CHRIST, as *approved of God amongst the Jews by miracles, and wonders, and signs, which God did by Him in the midst of them, &c.*

(F) To this divine appearance in the holy mount, and the voice, which came out of the excellent glory ("This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased") St. PETER specifically refers, in his second epistle (i. 17, 18.)

(G) This appears from his immediately entering the sepulchre, observing the position of the linen clothes, which he saw there (*John* xx. 7.) &c. &c.

Upon this subject, I have adopted the arrangement of Mr. *West*; with whom, in the circumstance chiefly connected with my argument (PETER's going twice to the sepulchre, to inquire more accurately into the particulars of the story) Dr. *Macknight* agrees.

(H) It may be inferred, still more clearly, from the correspondent account given by St. *Mark* (xvi. 11.)

It may be proper to observe, that I have generally referred to this evangelist; because it appears highly probable (as well from the testimony of the fathers, as from the internal evidence of the work itself) that his gospel, written at the desire of the brethren of *Rome*, was chiefly suggested, or certainly advised and authorized by St. PETER. On this topic *Lardner*, as usual, is very minute and accurate.

(I)

(I) Οὐδεις τε αὐτῶν πωπῆς, τὰ συμβάντα τοῖς πρὸς ἀνῆρημένοις τρέσας, ἐξέστη τῆς ἑταιρίας, καὶ ἀνέκηνυξε τοῖς ἄλλοις, εἰς φῶς ἀγαγὼν τὰ συντεθειμένα. (EUSEB. D. E. iii. 7.)

(K) PETER's recovery seems likewise to have been foretold, by implication, in the word *ἐπιστρέψας* (Luke xxii. 32.)

(L) In opposition to those, who contend that St. PETER occupied the chair of *Rome* twenty-five years, the indefatigable *Lardner* has proved, from the most respectable authorities, that he only came to that city at the earliest A. D. 63 or 64, and was crucified there at the latest A. D. 65.

(M) From this, and some other passages on the gospels, *Bellarmino* has adduced twenty-eight reasons, in favour of the usurped supremacy of the *Romish* church ! But it seems perfectly clear that, wherever its first Bishop and tutelar Saint (PETER) is distinguished from the other apostles, a primacy of order, not of power, is intended ; and CHRIST himself indeed, more than once, asserted their entire equality.

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THE END.

